LEARNING / K1

'Chloe's home' is tops at London art exhibit

NEWS / A2

Reporters plant trees for slain colleagues

ENTERTAINMENT / J1

Pacman has no advice for Tiger Woods

SPORTS / A29

RP gold haul rises to 11 in SEA Games

It's a weird, wild, wonderful world

PARIS—HERE ARE THE weird, wild and wonderful stories from 2009:

• Antigovt officials in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu found a way to literally stop airport workers from pocketing bribes. They

IT'S A WEIRD JOY

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, December 14, 2009 • 16 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 6 P18

Moro rebels storm Basilan jail, set free 31 prisoners

By Julio S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—USING SLEDGEhammers and bolt cutters, dozens of Moro rebels yesterday smashed their way into the Basilan provincial jail, freeing 31 inmates, in a predawn attack that added to the image of lawlessness in the province.

A jail guard and one of the raiders were killed in the assault, which enabled the rebels to rescue two detained Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commanders, officials said.

Several suspected members of the dreaded Abu Sayyaf bandit group also dashed to freedom.

The raid occurred just hours before Defense Secretary and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales flew into Basilan for a visit.

"We have kidnappings, beheading and now a jailbreak. The state of lawlessness is becoming serious here," Basilan's Roman Catholic Bishop Martin Jumoad told the Inquirer.

The jail attack occurred at about 1:45 a.m.

MORO, A9

Agusan gunmen free 46 hostages

Tribal court to handle murder raps

By Rosa May de Guzman and Joelfrey Maikere
Inquirer Mindanao

PROSPERIDAD, AGUsan del Sur—A three-day hostage drama ended yesterday when tribal gunmen released their remaining 46 hostages after authorities agreed not to arrest them and animals were sacrificed.

"It's really a merry Christmas for us. Thank God for this," housewife Nida Rabuzado exclaimed on hearing the news that her husband Casimo and the others had been freed after tough negotiations deep in the forest of San Martin village in Agusan del Sur.

Under the deal, authorities agreed to transfer pending murder cases against the leader of the kidnappers and his men to a tribal court and disarm both them and a rival clan.

"For at last! Yahoo!" Vice Gov. Santiago Cane said in a mobile phone text message to the media after he picked up the hostages from the gunmen's hideout in a cleared patch of jungle on a mountaintop.

AGUSAN, A12

RELEASED, FINALLY Villagers, who were held captive by armed men at a mountainous farming village in San Martin, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, were freed late Sunday afternoon. DENNIS JAY SANTOS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Hunt still on for suspects in massacre

By Christian V. Esguerra and Jocelyn R. Uy
in Manila
and Edwin Fernandez and Aquiles Zonio
Inquirer Mindanao

SECURITY FORCES, STILL ARMED WITH emergency powers though martial law had been lifted, pressed ahead with the hunt for those behind the massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao, officials said yesterday.

"Rebellion has been quelled, rebellion has been stopped," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in his weekly media forum aired over the government-run Radyo ng Bayan.

"But the search for those who still need to be found continues because Maguindanao is still under a state of emergency," he said. "The military's mopping-up operations are ongoing, such as hunting for those who should be hunted."

"As for evidence gathered during the rebellion, it will be used by filing rebellion charges ... this is also true for evidence in the multiple murder charges," Remonde said.

HUNT, A8

Probe plunder raps vs Ampatuans, gov't urged

By Philip C. Tubeza

THROW THE BOOK AT THEM

The alleged ill-gotten wealth of the Ampatuans that spawned their mansions, "war arsenal" and large private army should be looked into, now that the brouhaha over martial law in Maguindanao is over, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

At the same time, the government should ensure that clan members are brought to justice for the massacre of 57 civilians last month, he said.

"The government's efforts should be shifted back to what started it all, to make those responsible for the massacre and human indignities pay for their inhumanity ... Throw the book at them," Arroyo said.

Senate Minority Floor Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the Ampatuans should account for P1.5 billion in agrarian reform funds that were released this year even though no list of specific projects to be funded was submitted.

Besides filing charges of murder and rebellion, the government should determine if the Ampatuans could be charged with other crimes such as plunder, conspiracy of tax evasion for their purported unexplained wealth and the retention of the massacre victims, Arroyo said.

Mistletoe is a separate offense, he said. "These are separate offenses that can stand on their own. They should be charged with plunder for the many mansions and palaces that they have."

Arroyo wondered how the

PROBE, A11

YOUNG STORYTELLER Luca Prieto-Romualdez, son of INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez, reads a story to children during the read-along session. EDDIE ROTEN

Stories, gifts for kids at Inquirer Read-Along

By Kate V. Pedroso
Inquirer Research

CHRISTMAS ARRIVED EARLY on Saturday for 300 children who were treated to heart-warming stories and gifts of books and toys during an Inquirer Read-Along session held at the newspaper's office in Makati City.

The stories were read by Inquirer president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez and her son, Luca.

STORIES, A22

Civil gov't now more dependent on military

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

IN RESPONSE TO ESCALATING public pressure, President Macapagal-Arroyo on Saturday lifted martial law in Maguindanao, averting a ruling by the Supreme Court on petitions to strike down the draconian measure as unconstitutional.

Presidential Proclamation No. 1958, which placed the province under martial law and suspended the writ of habeas corpus, was scrapped after eight days.

It was the first time the extraordinary measure was used under the 1987 Constitution, which restored Philippine democracy but which placed restrictions on the exercise of martial law powers, since the overthrow of the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship in the 1986 People Power Revolution.

PP 1959 was withdrawn in the midst of fierce debates in the joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate last week, where opposition Liberal Party senators called for the termination of martial law

CIVIL GOV'T, A8

Worldwide rallies push climate deal

US SUPPORTERS OF A STRONG climate deal in Copenhagen on Saturday lit candles and erected a mock Noah's Ark in Washington, warning leaders that the planet faced a crisis of biblical proportions.

The rally in view of the US Capitol was the culmination of a day of demonstrations around the world, including in the Danish capital where tens of thousands took to the streets once

WORLDWIDE, A8

HOLIDAY MAGIC A Christmas fairy is featured in one of the many colorful floats that paraded at the SM Mall of Asia on Saturday as part of its holiday treat for children. BOY SANTILLAN

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Congress to wrap up joint session

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza

WITH MARTIAL LAW IN MAGUINDANAO LIFTED, the administration-backed majority in Congress is expected to move to adjourn its deliberations today without resorting to a vote on whether or not to revoke President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration.

"We have to meet to joint session (today) because the session was only suspended last session, but he added that he would pursue the vote in the Supreme Court because "substantive rights are involved."

Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin, who resigned in a verbal exchange with Enrile in the first day of the session, was talking the joint Congress' next move lightly. "It's pointless but maybe [Enrile's] brigade is filing," Santiago said.

"My ultimate advice to law was to lift martial law and to kick out those advisers, whether they are legal or not. They should resign. They're incontrovertible," she added.

Sen. Richard J. Gordon said Congress or the Supreme Court should still make a determination if there was sufficient factual basis for President Arroyo to declare declared martial law.

"If not, there might be inconsistency of martial law left and right for misconduct reasons. And then it will be subdivisions after that or five days. You don't want that," Gordon said.

"If we take a long time to do that, the spirit of the law is defeated. And we took too much time," he said.

Sen. Loren Legarda noted that Congress failed to meet within 48 hours as mandated by the Constitution to decide whether or not to revoke Mrs. Arroyo's martial law declaration.

"In a week, martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus is lapsed on by more than eight days. This is sufficient to say administration to do what it intends to do, whether constitutional or unconstitutional, legal or illegal," Legarda said.

Circumvent law provisions

"It seems that the President and her advisers have found a way to circumvent the spirit and intent of the new constitutional provision on martial law," she said.

"I therefore strongly support that the Supreme Court to review a judgment on the merits of the martial law declaration to define future double inclusion of saying with a major constitutional question for the regime's own political gains," she added.

Senate Majority Floor Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said the Senate could still pass its own resolution expressing its opposition to the declaration.

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Baguio reporters plant trees for massacre victims

BAGUIO CITY—TREES GARnet were but they can keep alive the memory of those who fight to keep alive[illegible]

That is the logic behind Baguio's 18-year-old tradition of planting a tree for every journalist who dies, and Sunday, Dantel, who gathered local reporters on Sunday to plant 57 trees in memory of the journalists and civilians who were killed in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, on Nov. 23.

The trees were planted in a vacant lot not far from the Baguio Police Provincial Office. Journalists and civic groups have been protesting those developers.

It is something (some point) doomed projects for the 57 massacre victims is a ritual where participation near the children (age 4to), (secretary, football, cabbage, and fantasy (not sure) were offered to the spirits.

Jeanne Lipscomb, the 22-year-old daughter of a local reporter, also had prayers for the victims.

"The Lord of love and life, we are not here to judge you to condemn but to celebrate the lives of 57 Filipinos who perished during last month's Ampatuan massacre.... As our country grieves, allow us to offer 57 new lives in the trees we have planted," she said.

"Let our activity be our catharsis as we have judgment and condemnation of those behind the killings to your supreme authority," she said. May the memory of [illegible] and sisters live on as the trees we have planted reach for the eternal sky."

The members of planting "memory trees" dates back to the 1990 Luzon earthquake when Dantel, the late journalist Jose Nicolas Dignat, and Rose Hamada, and others began rebuilding portions of the flood-wrecked, where Baguio draws its water supply. Howard Calbreza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR SEN. MIGZ ZUBIRI

We, the friends and supporters of our champion Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, from the various local government units, the academe, youth , cooperatives and environmental sectors, strongly **DECRY and DENOUNCE** the misleading advertisements put out by Koko Pimentel in major news papers last Thursday, December 10, 2009.

It's **misleading** as it paints a grim scenario of the state of the protest filed at the SET which is far from the truth. Koko Pimentel failed to mention the status of the counter-protest filed by Sen. Migz, to expose the electoral fraud caused by syndicates operating in opposition-dominated areas.

To be fair, sources revealed that Sen. Migz' team of revisors exposed a total of **130,000 fake ballots, marked ballots, and written by one ballots** in their **initial** 25 percent revision of their counter-protest. The bulk of which came from the cities of **MAKATI, QUEZON CITY, CALOOCAN, MANILA,** and the provinces of **LAGUNA, QUEZON, BULACAN, BATANGAS**, and are in the process of presenting forensic evidence to further prove its case and strengthen the fact that electoral fraud truly was widespread in several areas in Luzon initiated by these criminal syndicates.

Mr. Koko Pimentel also failed to mention that he has already lost almost 18,000 votes in the actual physical recount of ballots, meaning that there were votes reflected in the Statement of Votes (SOV) but were **not actually written on the ballots**. After the physical recounting of the said ballots, it was discovered that there was a gross and blatant addition of Koko Pimentel's name for reasons unknown. This is a clear case of **"dagdag-bawas"** to a tune of 18,000 votes, thereby resulting in an additional vote gain of 18,000 votes in favour of Sen. Zubiri.

With evidence such as this, we are confident that our champion Sen. Migz Zubiri will be accorded the opportunity to continue his crusade to open the remaining balance of 75 percent of his counter-protest, so that upon its completion, the Filipino people will be given the whole picture of its true will.

We believe that this is not a delaying tactic, as it is the right of every counter-protestant to seek the truth on his initial 25 percent and be given the opportunity to completely present his case. It is not fair that Sen. Migz be continuously maligned and discredited. Those who *know* him can clearly attest that he is a man of integrity and character. **It is everyone's responsibility to exercise prudence in making accusations, especially when a person's reputation would be placed in danger of being destroyed.** With no taint of controversy in his public career, a check with the senate record will show the MIGZ is one of the most hard working and most productive senators. He has reflected a perfect attendance record since he assumed office in 2007.

In the Senate, he has championed our causes by authoring and sponsoring the passage of the following: **RENEWABLE ENERGY ACT, RENT CONTROL LAW OF 2009, THE PHILIPPINE COOPERATIVE CODE OF 2008, SOCIALIZED AND LOW COST HOUSING LOAN RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM ACT, THE PAG-IBIG FUND LAW as well as SB 3402 – National Commission on Muslim Filipinos Act, SB 3106 Magna Carta for Homeowners and homeowners Association and SB 3496- Mindanao Economic Development Authority** all of which will soon be signed into law.

AS MAJORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE, he spearheaded the passage of several national landmark measures, as well as hundreds of local bills with his brand of **NO-NONSENSE leadership** and tireless work ethic.

WE ADMIRE HIM because while awaiting for the outcome of his protest, he has not wasted time by idly sitting down and doing nothing, but rather he has proven to be one of the most effective and efficient performers of the 14th congress.

We, his supporters and friends have FAITH in the process of the Senate Electoral Tribunal. That they will be able to come out with a FAIR and HONEST decision which shall truly reflect the will of the people and this nation.

MABUHAY KA SEN. MIGZ!

THIS AD IS PAID FOR BY THE FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF SEN. MIGZ ZUBIRI

Original signed

Docs say GMA fine–Remonde

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo … yesterday checked out of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City where she had undergone a regular physical examination over the weekend.

"She is in good spirits. Doctors said she doesn't [have] any [serious illness]," said Press Secretary Cerge Remonde.

Mr. Arroyo was admitted to the hospital Friday night for what Malacañang said was a routine checkup be- fore her departure for Copenhagen on Wednesday to attend the United Nations climate change conference. On Saturday, she briefly left the hospital to preside over a National Security Council meeting in Malacañang where she lifted martial law in Maguindanao.

She checked back into the hospital later in the day to consult with the team, Christian V. Esguerra

BIG SALE!
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Twitter, Facebook biggest winners of 2009

WASHINGTON—TWITTER, FUELED BY smartphones and online bursts of 140 characters, soared to lofty heights over the past year while Facebook eclipsed MySpace to become the world's leading social network.

"These are the big winners," said Jason Kruth, a North Carolina-based social media consultant and founder of SocialBrush.com, an organizer of social media conferences. "Facebook more or less tripled their size this year." "Twitter grew immensely," added Kruth. "I think they were somewhere around maybe two or four million users at the beginning of the year. Now they're near 40 million."

With 350 million members, "if Facebook were a country it would be the fourth most populous nation," said Scott Hannah, a former deputy press secretary to President George W. Bush who has also worked for software giant Microsoft.

"Going back one year ago, I don't think people would have thought Twitter would have had the influence it's had," added Hannah, who now runs Walnut Communications, a Seattle-based public relations consulting firm that often would involve planning using its services.

Influential tool

"It was gaining popularity but it has really exploded this year and it's done so in a way that's become incredibly pervasive," he said.

Twitter has reportedly spurned takeover offers worth hundreds of millions of dollars from Google and Facebook and its influence as a communications and newsbreaking tool has been validated in a number of ways over the past year.

In June, the Department of State asked Twitter to delay scheduled maintenance on the service because it was being used by protesters angered by the results of Iran's disputed presidential election.

More recently, Google and Microsoft began incorporating Twitter messages into their respective search engines, a new feature described as real-time search.

Communications platform

Rampant adoption of smartphones has much to do with Twitter's growth, according to Jack Levis, cofounder and chief executive of ImageShack, an online media hosting company which uses yfrog.com, a service for sharing images and videos on Twitter.

"The explosion of smartphones in the United States and many other countries has led to the success and ease of communication between people, and Twitter is certainly in the middle of that," Levis said.

"People obviously want to communicate and Twitter is really a communications platform," he said of the service that allows users to prepare one another with messages of 140 characters or less and provide links to the Web.

"It's a hybrid between instant messenger and e-mail," Levis said.

Twitter has spawned a host of thousands of applications created for Twitter by outside software developers credited with fueling the popularity of the microblogging service.

Facebook Connect

Facebook, which entered the trend of opening up to outside creators of fun social programs, was also quick to realize the appeal of being able to connect from anywhere or anytime.

"The thing they've done, and MySpace didn't do...is they've really expanded the scope of their network past the initial silos," Kruth said. "Facebook Connect is a big piece of that, where you can take your Facebook account and log in from other places."

Facebook and Twitter are popular because essentially they "provide real value to people in their personal and work lives," according to Hannah.

"You can keep up with hundreds if not thousands just by having a Facebook account or by being active on Twitter," he said.

Hannah also credited social media tools with "redefining the way in which companies or politicians relate to their consumers or constituents."

"Companies or politicians who have taken to Facebook or Twitter or YouTube are building more of a permanent relationship with their constituents or with their customers because they're engaged in a conversation," he said.

Emphasis on commerce

Kruth predicted Twitter's growth is "going to slow," saying it is unsustainable the San Francisco-based firm could match this year's meteoric surge in user numbers.

Twitter needs to be wary of spammers "posting out garbage, bad information, porn links and things like that, trying to direct-message everyone in the entire service," Kruth added. "That would cause people to restrict their networks a little more."

Hannah warned that if Twitter "starts becoming overrun with spam or advertising or becomes too complicated they might see their growth slow down or even reverse."

Kruth suspects Twitter, which has yet to unveil a plan for making money, will seek over the next year to become "more of a marketing tool."

"I think there will be a lot of emphasis on providing more value to businesses and consumers in general," he said.

As for Facebook, Kruth said it "looks highly likely that they're going to launch a payment portal, a payment tool.

"There's debate over whether there would be high adoption of giving Facebook your credit card information," he said. "But if they do that, they're not only going to have your social network but your commerce too.

"And then they've pretty much locked in most of your activity online." AFP

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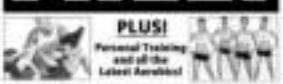

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Media, rights groups push for people's right to know

JOURNALISTS AND CIVIL RIGHTS activists will troop to the Senate today to push for the passage of a landmark Freedom of Information act before Congress goes on recess on Friday.

Members of the multisectoral Right to Know, Right Now! network—which includes journalists, academics, students and members of public-interest groups and nongovernment organizations—will march on the Senate in Pasay City to thank the senators for passing Senate Bill 3308, or the Freedom of Information Act, on second reading last week.

While its passage on second reading, SB 3308 remains alive and the country is now a giant step closer to the passage of a progressive and cooperative freedom of information act," the group said in a statement.

The coalition urged the senators to approve the bill on third reading and for both the Senate and the House of Representatives to convene the bicameral conference committee and approve the measure for signing into law by the President.

"The Freedom of Information Act will be a significant and lasting contribution of the 14th Congress in political and governance reforms in the country, to benefit our generation and the generations to come," the group said.

According to the group, the right to information has been held by the state to the executive, "and it is difficult to enforce its transfer."

The coalition said the Freedom of Information act would make the constitutional right to know and the state policy of full disclosure of transactions involving the public interest "fully operable."

The group said the proposed law would provide a detailed procedure for dealing with requests, and clearly the exact scope of the right. It provides implementing mechanisms for the automatic disclosure of key government transactions. It also puts in place effective sanctions to deter or make accountable the violation of the right.

"We cannot overemphasize the vital role that the Freedom of Information Act will play in the restructuring of Philippine society and politics. Freedom of information holds forth to the principle that public office is a public trust. Without proper information, we cannot hold public officials accountable for anything," it added.

The members will assemble on the Film Center grounds at 8:00 a.m. today before proceeding to the Senate building nearby. The network cited the chairman of the Senate committee on public information, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, for "decisively deep-bombing the bill through the committee process," and together with Majority Leader Juan Ponce Enrile, helping it forward in plenary.

The group also congratulated Quezon Rep. Lito Tolentino, chair of the technical working group on the bill in the House, who—with the help of Rep. Joel Villanueva and other lawmakers—efficiently pushed for the bill's passage before the first regular session of the 14th Congress closed in 2008.

But the bill still needs to go through the bicameral conference committee, which will reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill, it noted.

The group said the reconciled bill must then be approved by both houses before the lawmakers adjourn for the election. Congress takes a Christmas break on Dec. 18, and is scheduled to be legislative calendar, only nine sessions days remain before January 10 when Congress will open its session and Feb. 1 when it adjourns.

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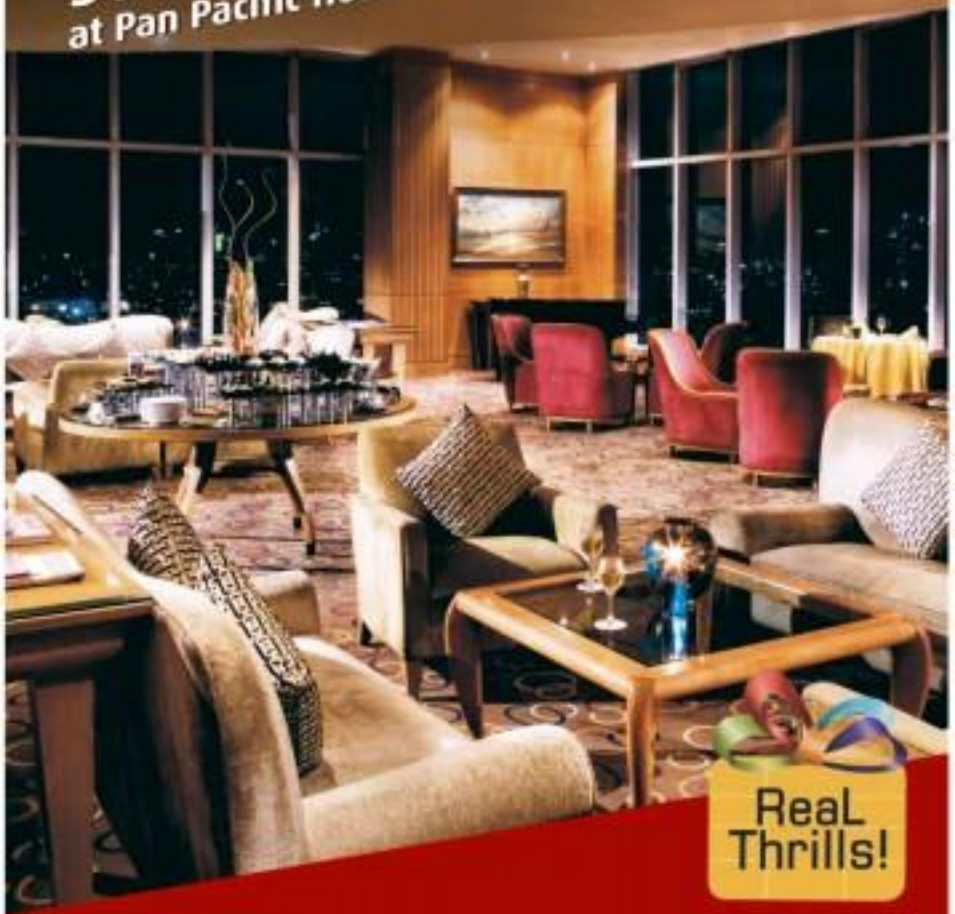

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Hunt still on for suspects in massacre

Frinnagay Al

Ms Arroyo on Saturday lifted martial law in Maguindanao, where the election-linked massacre occurred on Nov 23, after eight days during which more than 500 suspects were rounded up.

But Bersamin said that Maguindanao remained under the state of emergency that was declared after the worst political violence in the nation's history.

Martial rule was imposed in the country's second-poorest province to allow security with-out court orders and authorize police to detain members of the powerful political clan led by Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr., the President's former political ally.

The Ampatuans patriarch's namesake son, the Datu Unsay mayor, has been arrested and charged with multiple counts of murder for allegedly ordering the kidnapping and shooting of some 57 people, including 30 journalists and the wife and seven sisters of his rival, Esmael Mangudadatu.

The Ampatuans were later expelled from Ms Arroyo's ruling coalition and the clan patriarch was among 24 people arrested and separately charged with rebellion after martial law took effect.

Some 4,000 troops will remain in Maguindanao, while security checkpoints will stay in place on roads, military officials said.

Arrest warrants

However, police will now need court orders to arrest suspects or search private property for weapons or other evidence in the massacre and rebellion cases.

Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner Jr., spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said that Maguindanao was peaceful now go back to their old routine without fear as security forces had been able to foil an uprising among Ampatuan supporters.

Brawner said the lifting of martial law does not affect other military and police operations because much had been gained over the week.

While search operations for other hidden arms cache owned by the Ampatuans continued, government troops had been able to confiscate more than 1,000 unlicensed guns and half a million bullets from the family's stronghold, the province was under martial law.

"We are still pursuing these armed groups, which are remnants of the rebellion planned against the government in Maguindanao," Brawner said, adding that the military had been monitoring non-under lord rulers from these groups.

Army reviewing militias

Brawner also disclosed that the Philippine Army was already reviewing the administration of militia forces across the country to check if they were still functioning according to their mandates.

"If we need to disarmtate rebel forces because they are no longer performing their tasks, then we would do it," he said.

The Philippine National Police law enforcement agency said that despite the lifting of martial law, the police is carry firearms in Maguindanao and neighboring Sultan Kudarat province, as well as in Cotabato City, re-mained suspended.

PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa said law enforcement operations against recombinant firearms and purchase armed groups would continue until "removed vigor."

"We are happy to see that the people of Maguindanao are getting back on their feet and that normal business activity has resumed in the province after social chaos and government control were restored when Maguindanao was placed under martial law," Verzosa said in a statement.

Evacuees returning home

One of those returning home yesterday were the Reyneng Bellas and her family who fled from Shariff Aguak the morning after martial law was declared and came to Sultan Kudarat, leaving the military.

"We're returning home," she told the Inquirer in the booked personal belongings on a waiting tricycle (locally known as payong-payong with the side car covered with a huge umbrella).

"The Army knows we are ordinary civilians and we have nothing to do with the problem in Shariff Aguak," she said, recalling that during President Ferdinand Marcos's martial law regime, "civilians were shot at by soldiers."

"Now, I have not heard of anybody being killed by government forces, at least not yet, but who knows," she said.

More commuters yesterday filled the Cotabato-Isulan highway passing through at least 10 towns.

While the number of military checkpoints remains the same along the highway, soldiers were not as strict as during martial law," said Alladin Ilumang, 58.

Rozul Sarmen, 35, who fled Sitio Unang, said his hometown had been very quiet. "It's like a ghost town," he said as he prepared to return to Barangay Mets.

Some residents wary

But some people in the towns of Talitay, Guindulungan and Talitay remain wary.

"Soldiers here and there with their armored personnel carriers . . . Our province is like a war zone where there is no war at all," a Muslim educator who requested that he remained unidentified, told the Inquirer. "The presence of so many soldiers is a magnet for attacks from 'lawless groups, these rebels."

An Army corporal, who also refused to be named, said many soldiers were happy with the lifting of martial law. "We are so close. Perhaps we can get a furlough. Besides, it's Christmas," he said.

Catholic bishops expressed relief at the lifting of martial law but insisted the need to bring perpetrators of the massacre to justice.

"It has been my position that martial law should not be unreasonably prolonged. It is an indication that the objectives of martial law have already been attained," Tinong Bishop Nereo Odchimar, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said in a Church-run Radio Veritas. With reports from Norma L. Pizzadugan and Nancy Gervacio

Civil gov't now more dependent on military

Frinnagay Al

before the expiration of the 60-day period allowed by the Constitution.

The evocation of PP 1959 was well within the period, upstaging presidential critics who attacked the proclamation as a step toward putting other unilateral parts of the country under martial law in the run-up to the May presidential election.

The rebellionist has made it: whenever the joint session that is no one today on the occasion of Congress' oversight power to extend or not the 60-day period.

It has prompted Congress to consider adjournment or to special sessions. Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile has said he has no to no point going on with the joint session tomorrow "the matter for OO has lapsed."

Ms Arroyo withdrew her proclamation after approving the recommendations of the Cabinet security cluster in an emergency meeting on Saturday.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Ms Arroyo decided to lift the proclamation after consultations with security officials.

Ermita said "the local government is back and functioning ... We can say rebellion has been addressed and the purpose for which it was called has been achieved."

The security cluster's recommendations were based on the following developments:

+ Charges of multiple murder were filed against 247 persons in the Ampatuan clan, 56 of whom were filed against 24 persons, nearly members of the Ampatuan clan.

+ The military and police cleared "rebel positions" in the towns of Ampatuan, Datu Unsay, Shariff Aguak and several others.

+ The criminal justice system is back in place and working, and the local government had been purged of Ampatuan (18 out of 36 Maguindanao town were held by members of the clan).

The crackdown on the Ampatuan political gulp on the procedure was facilitated by the martial law proclamation that allowed warrantless searches.

Malacañang made it clear that while law and order had been restored, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Cotabato remained under a state of emergency issued by the government shortly after the Nov. 23 massacre.

Not ruling any chances

The government is not taking any chances in ensuring no resurgence in natural what it claimed was a rebellion by the Ampatuans.

Gen. Victor Ibrado, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said more than 4,000 troops had been deployed to check rebellious groups from creating disorder, attacking military units and covering and intimidating dozens of witnesses.

The arrest of whether there was a rebellion, one of two conditions specified by the Constitution to justify the declaration of martial law, remained contentious. The other condition is invasion by a foreign power.

Malacañang claims that martial law was proclaimed to suppress a "rebellion in the offing" by armed groups loyal to the Ampatuan clan. Seven petitions have been filed asking the Supreme Court to nullify PP 1959 on the ground that there is no rebellion. The court has asked the government to submit memoranda on this issue.

The petitioners insisted that there was no factual basis for the martial law proclamation since there was no actual rebellion or invasion. The legal issues could not be resolved on the basis of the perspective of the members from rumored to the 1972 martial law declaration into custody by Marcos.

Airtight case

Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, the martial law administrator in Maguindanao, said that military operations would not be affected by the move and by the lifting of martial law "as we have gained the momentum since Dec. 4."

"The arrest, searches and seizures that we have made will contribute to building an airtight case against the masterminds of the Nov. 23 massacre," Ferrer said. "And that is the reason for accomplishment of the short-lived martial law."

He added: "We shall continue with the military and police operations against the remaining suspects and strengthen our checkpoints to ensure that people are insulated against hostile acts of private armed groups that we intend to disarm and dismantle."

It cannot be denied that the declaration of a state of emergency in Maguindanao, followed by the mass arbitrary arrests of the armed group, the proclamation, facilitated the arrest and indictment of members of the Ampatuan clan, and the uncovering of interests on their property and more atrocious human rights violations.

Without the power to make warrantless searches and to make searches, the discovery of the evidence of crimes of the Maguindanao warlords would not have been possible.

As a result of the crackdown through martial law, Human Rights Commissioner Leila de Lima said more witnesses had come forward to testify that the Ampatuans had illegally killed at least 208 other people during its rule since 2001.

More military dependence

The lifting of the climate of fear to enable victims to testify is at the heart of the clan's monstrous philosophy of martial law.

The other to the restoration of the authority of the central government in preventing citizens from human rights abuses by lawless warlords.

The government still has to prove that it can sustain its crackdown the gains derived from the use of martial law powers.

Civil government has been shown by this martial law episode to have become more dependent on military intervention for restoring its authority over rebel groups, if not in the suppressing reign of warlordism or change governments, as decisions by Edsa I and Edsa II.

Worldwide rallies push climate deal

Frinnagay Al

the voices of the 194 nations present on climate change.

Unlike in Copenhagen, where fringe armed rioters, the Washington demonstration was a smaller and orderly affair in which dozens of activists held a candlelight vigil as the sun set on the National Mall.

The activist group Avaaz.org set up a wooden model of Noah's Ark with the inscription "Climate Plan B," a reference to the story in the monotheistic faiths of the ruined to save God's representatives from a great deluge.

"The ark is ultimately a symbol of hope," said the Rev. Derrick Harkins of Washington's 19th Street Baptist Church. "We in human beings have been given the tools to make sure we can make our way to the other side of a crisis."

The demonstrators urged US President Barack Obama to support an ambitious and binding treaty in Copenhagen. Short of cooperative resolution to US action on climate change, Obama wants Copenhagen to consist of a set of voluntary pledges by nations rather than a document with legal obligations.

"I would hope that none of us would be satisfied with pledges

Moro rebels storm Basilan jail, set free 31 prisoners

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From page A1

More than 30 MILF raiders took part in the assault, with some climbing ladders to shoot at guards while others broke into the jail and forced the still-dozen open, officials said.

They broke through a hole in the rear wall of the prison through which they fled into nearby forests, said the regional police deputy director, Senior Supt. Rolando Pat-ingalan.

Two of those who escaped were MILF guerrillas convicted of involvement in the July 2007 ambush and killing of 14 Marines, 10 of whom were beheaded.

Several detainees held for common crimes also escaped.

Shooting their way out

Government troops and police were pursuing the attackers and the escaped inmates, police said.

It was the latest violence in Mindanao, scene of a decadelong Moro separatist rebellion.

The raiders used sledgehammers to make an opening on the prison's 10-foot-high rear perimeter wall and used bolt cutters to destroy the padlock of a jail cell where the two MILF commanders were held, before shooting their way out, according to Senior Supt. Abubakar Tolawie, Basilan police chief.

Only three of 16 guards were on duty at the time, according to initial reports.

Second mass jailbreak

Jail guard Bot. Nasser was killed in the raid, while another guard, Noorr Sali, was wounded.

The one-hour facility has about 61 inmates. Police said it was the second mass jailbreak on the island after 53 inmates, including 24 fellow bandits, escaped in 2004.

Basilan Vice Gov. Al Rasheed Sakkalahi said he received information that the MILF's Head Limpas, also known as "Commander Long," was behind the raid.

Sakalahid identified the two MILF escapees as Usman Limpas, a nephew of Commander Long, and Shaljit Ben Asnawi.

"These two rebel leaders are high-risk prisoners," Sakalahi said. "We have requested a search warrant with the military units on the island to pursue them. We've wanted an internal inquiry to determine responsibility for the lax security in the jail."

Martial law not needed

The MILF, which is seeking broad autonomy in the Mindanao, is in peace talks with the government.

The attack occurred as Gonzales and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado flew to Isabela City, the provincial capital, to meet Catholic Church leaders who have opposed the martial law order declared in the province following several kidnappings.

Gonzales said the jailbreak called for a deeper assessment of the peace and security situation in Basilan.

He said there was a need for better law enforcement in the province and that the ambush in 2007 should address the problem of having "if there's any."

Resisting to calls from some sectors for martial law to be imposed in the province, Gonzales said, "Martial law is not yet needed in Basilan."

State of emergency

Ermand told the lawyers that he was taking back his earlier proposal for martial law to be imposed on the province, but that the government should consider a declaration of a state of emergency.

"The ground to declare martial law is very vague. There is no rebellion here," Ermand said. "What we need is to implement the earlier proclamation in 2007 (of a) state of emergency."

The bishop said people in Basilan had become conscious with recent incidents of violence, which included the beheading of a kidnapped factory worker, whose head was later found in a city plaza.

On Thursday, gunmen kidnapped the vice president of Basilan State College.

Jailbreaks are common in the country where many of the more than 1,000 prisoners who escaped the earthquake are unrecorded and guards are underpaid. With reports from AFP, Reuters and Inquirer Research

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BSP warned on raising OFW hopes

By Jaroslaw Anbig

BSP GOVERNOR AMANDO TETANGCO JR. warned the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) against making statements about the expected rise in remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in countries where the Philippine government is negotiating for more job opportunities for them.

The Federated Association of Manpower Exporters (Same) said the expected statements concerning new markets in New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Japan and Guam as potential sources of dollar remittances was just giving more ill-founded hopes to illegal recruitment businesses that receive jobless Filipinos with the promise of high wages.

"The BSP statements are often misleading and give the impression that there are new markets that are being tapped by the government such as Australia, Japan, South Korea, Canada, Taiwan and Guam," Same executive director Lito Santiago said in a statement.

He said that the BSP statements were mostly based on "old and hypothetical" assurances by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

Santiago noted that the POEA had not approved any new job orders up to now for Guam and that actual mobilization for the construction of a $6-military base on the island may only start in 2010.

To lighten Okinawa's load, Tokyo and Washington have agreed to relocate about 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2014, but the US military says the plan cannot move forward until a new base in southern Okinawa is finished.

Due to their seasonal character to Guam, the US Marines are to relocate from the Futenma Air Station in southern Okinawa to Camp Schwab on the northern side. The relocation was agreed to by Japan and the US in 2006 but was later put on hold.

As for Australia, New Zealand and Canada, Santiago said that "it is well known that the three countries' wages to nonskilled and job-seekers had completely stagnated.

In East Asia, Santiago said the POEA deployed only 30 caregivers and nurses to Japan on Sept. 27 while the South Korea trainee deployment has not reached even 4,000 this year. Taiwan's special hiring program has only deployed less than a thousand for 2008 compared to the private sector which deployed more than 40,000 factory workers and caregivers.

"Those numbers have dried up and only the Middle East countries of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Libya where over two million Filipinos are concentrated are steadily increasing remittances flows," Santiago said.

The recruitment executive, however, warned that the new 200,000 OFWs to Dubai, the second biggest source of remittances this year, were likely to send less next year because of the country's debt crisis.

The BSP earlier said that in the first three quarters of the year, OFWs sent home through banks a total of $12,789 billion, up $114.43 million or 0.21 percent from the $12.275 billion in the same period in 2008.

The decline in remittances from the US was offset by the $1.36 billion sent by Filipinos in Japan, which, respectively, were 16- and 17-percent higher compared to last year.

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RP, Russia ink air pact

THE PHILIPPINES AND RUSSIA have signed an air agreement that would allow Russian airlines to fly daily chartered flights into the country beginning April next year, the Department of Tourism (DOT) said.

Tourism Secretary Joe Durano and his Russian counterpart signed the agreement amending the 1992 ASEAN-RUSSIA SERVICES AGREEMENT on Dec. 1.

The new agreement is under all Russian carriers to unlimited flight frequencies from any three points in Russia to three points in the Philippines, namely Manila, Clark and another destination such as Cebu, Davao or Iloilo.

Before the 1992 ASA, a Philippine and a Russian air carrier had one flight per week on the Manila-Moscow route.

Durano said the new agreement would be a big boost to the country's tourism industry, noting that Russians spend a year-long staying as high spenders.

Kristine L. Alave

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 14, 2009
3rd Week of Advent
John of the Cross

1st Reading: Num 24:2-7, 15-17a
Gospel: Mt 21:23-27

Jesus had entered the Temple and was teaching when the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders of the people came to him and asked, "What authority have you to act like this? Who gave you authority to do all this?"

Jesus answered them, "I will also ask you a question, only one. And if you give me an answer, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Where did John get his baptism; was it a work of God, or was it merely something human?"

They reasoned out among themselves, "If we reply that it was a work of God, he will say 'Why, then, did you not believe him? And if we say 'The baptism of John was merely something human, because of the people; since all hold John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what right I do these things."

Commentary:

In Advent, the world is awake, shaking the halls, and leading to the birth of another infant. The birth of Christ is a part of our identity: celebrating us, that we also were born, that we were fragile, that we were ordained. For those born in December and for any who remember their natal beginnings in the cold, there is a special affinity to a time of year symbolizing infant beginnings, a season in which it seems to be human, like no other, that in and celebrations of our own birth are juxtaposed with a maternity story told long before we were born, and one that will continue to be told long after us.

The story of God is a story filled with paradox: stories. In a world, where significance and identity are constructed by what we do, by what we have accomplished, by what we own, the Kingdom of God arrives unrelentingly, more affirmatively, by the Kingdom, our eternal destiny before we become mold or shape. Before we have done anything, before we have acquired the right lifestyle or even made the appropriate confessions. In this Kingdom, the very God of creation steps into the world as a child as well.

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Retirees oppose SSS high-tech ID project

By Dixie L. Lazo

AN ASSOCIATION OF RETIREES HAS OPposed opposition to a P1.68 billion project of the Social Security System (SSS) to issue high-tech identification cards to its members.

The Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP) said that contrary to what the SSS said the project would not result in significant savings for the state-run pension fund.

Under the project, the SSS has engaged the services of Smartmatic Corp., an information technology firm, to produce 12 million of the so-called unified multi-purpose identification (Umid) cards, the same platform that will be used by the Government Service Insurance System, Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) and Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG).

"The economies of scale are illusory," PARP director Honorio Ocampo said in a letter to the SSS.

"Apparently Smartmatic has proposed that by encompassing the four agencies, the unit cost of the card would go down under the principles of economies of scale. We disagree," Ocampo said.

He said that with more than 23 million members, the SSS already enjoys all the advantages of the economies of scale.

"Adding the members of the GSIS, PhilHealth and Pag-Ibig has absolutely no effect on the equation," he said.

PARP also pointed out that it would be "extremely risky" for the SSS to enter into an agreement with other government agencies because of the latter's "shaky finances."

It said the GSIS, PhilHealth and the Pag-Ibig Fund had unresolved financial issues.

PARP also said that the claim that a new ID system would make it easier for members to transact business with the SSS was a "myth" since people who do business with other government agencies are able to do so without need of a "super ID."

In justifying the Umid, the SSS said it would "remove the unnecessary and costly redundancies of maintaining multiple identification systems in government."

It said Smartmatic had submitted a competitive bid of P140 per card, for a total of 12 million Umid cards over a five-year period.

The SSS said there were even complaints that the cost submitted by Smartmatic was "too low and unfeasible."

"Foreign vendors have estimated the Umid card to cost between $5 to $8 each," it said.

EU seeks WTO ruling on RP tax on spirits

THE EUROPEAN UNION WANTS THE World Trade Organization (WTO) to establish a panel to rule on its dispute with the Philippines over excise taxes on distilled spirits which the EU claims discriminate against imported liquor.

"The European Union considers that this regime (tax) has an impact against imported spirits and is thereby in clear breach of international trade rules," the Office of the European Commission in the Philippines in Ortigas Pasig said in a statement.

The EU has raised the issue with the Philippines repeatedly over the past years without success and WTO consultations held with the Philippines in Manila on Oct. 8 also failed to lead to a solution.

"Unfortunately, WTO consultations have not indicated any clear prospect of scientific remedy to this longstanding tax discrimination against imported spirits," said European Trade Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner.

"Therefore, the EU has no other option than to request a WTO panel to rule on this issue. We are convinced the EU will prevail in what is a clear case of tax discrimination but we still hope the Philippine government would remedy the situation without waiting for the completion of WTO dispute settlement procedures," she said.

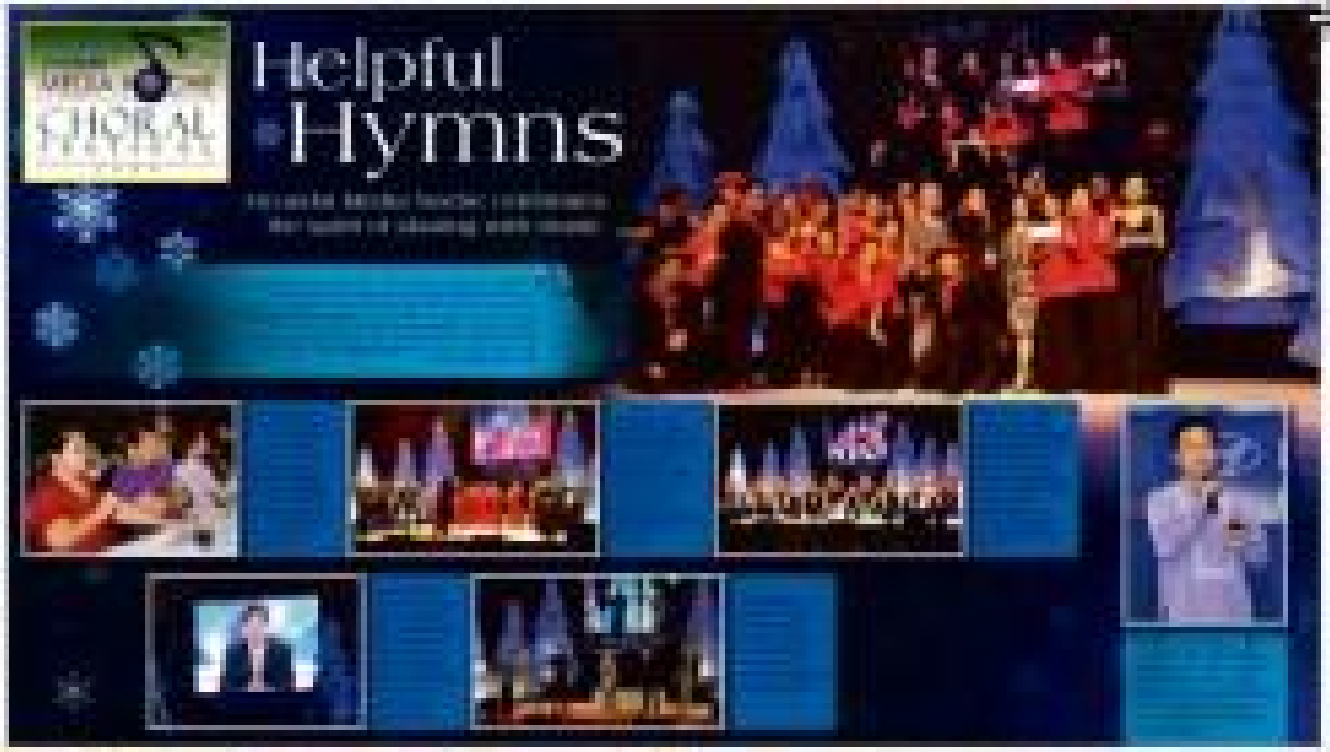
Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, head of the EC delegation in the Philippines, said that despite numerous requests that the discrimination against foreign spirits be removed, "it has not been possible so far to find a satisfactory solution."

MacDonald expressed the hope that positive legislation soon in Congress would be passed shortly and welcomed the decision of the EU to drop the case as soon as the discrimination is removed.

The European liquor industry has raised concerns since the introduction of a new excise tax regime in the Philippines in 2005. Those concerns became more serious as discrimination against imported spirits was aggravated by subsequent reforms of the regime, notably with the introduction of new legislation in 2004.

"This has had a significant impact on exports of EU spirits to the Philippine market. More specifically, it is estimated that from 2004 to 2007 EU exports of spirits to the Philippines have more than halved (from around $37 million to $15 million)," MacDonald said.

The EU is the Philippines' fourth largest trading partner, accounting for 12 percent of total trade in goods valued at $9 billion in 2008, the EU was the top market destination for Philippine merchandise exports (17.3 percent of total), the largest source of foreign direct investment (34 percent), and the largest supplier of foreign commercial loans contracted by the Philippines (46 percent). Cynthia D. Balana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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

'Dis-Graced'

TODAY IS GOV. GRACE PADAOG'S DEADLINE FOR filing a motion for reconsideration with the Commission on Elections, to seek a reversal of the Second Division's decision declaring Benjamin Dy the rightful winner of the 2007 election for governor of Isabela.

The decision was not a surprise; a throng of Dy family members and political supporters crowded the Comelec offices the day the voluminous ruling was promulgated. (This means, not that they are so unusually tightly knit family—aren't most politicians?—but that they had advance word of the favorable finding.) And yet the Comelec's decision still took the breath away.

EDITORIAL

Padaog won reelection in 2007 by winning with a margin of just over 17,000 votes. The curiously timed decision of the Comelec's controversial Second Division is based, essentially, on its finding that an enormous number of ballots had been filled up by just one person. How many ballots? About 18,000—or just enough for Dy to overtake Padaog's lead.

Public upheaval immediately began to convert around the notion that Padaog's ouster-in-the-making was the second blow of a triple whammy aimed at the opposition. The week before, it was Bulacan Gov. Josefina Mendoza who was summoned; perhaps thanksgiving Gov. "Fessing Ed" Panlilio was next?

Broadcast journalist-turned-actress Tetkoy Tetkoy, both in his radio show and on TV, has correctly pointed out that voters abhor an administration counteroffensive against the first governor begun circulating many months before Mendoza, Padaog and Panlilio all decided to affiliate themselves, either formally or loosely, with the Liberal Party. Strictly speaking then, their current affiliation could not have been the reason for their troubles (in Panlilio's case it seems only a matter of time) with the Comelec.

And yet, politics is addictive, can truly in reverse of nevermore bar; also in terms of motives. The fact that the then Lanao governors were now affiliated with the leading opposition party must have played a part in their belated election troubles.

Ever since she won an improbable victory over incumbent Faustino Dy Jr. in 2000, Padaog has been a thorn on the side of the administration, the face of principled and politically effective opposition to the allies of the administration. Panlilio cited not a dramatic victory over two of President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal friends in the race for governor in her home province in 2007. And also in 2007, Panlilio and Mendoza were instrumental in exposing the disbursement of cash-filled paper bags to local officials, right inside Malacañang. (That exposé may have marked the true point of no return in President Macapagal-Arroyo's unsteady sliding survey ratings.)

Even without their new affiliation, then, the three governors were vulnerable to political nevermores—because they were all facing electoral protests. Casting their lot with the Liberals could only have increased their vulnerability.

In the case of Padaog, the 2000 Magsaysay Awardee for government service, she helped case Benjamin Dy filed against her prospered against both law and logic. Remolo Macalintal, the President's own election lawyer, accused a Comelec "syndicate" of a "very whimsical, capricious and arbitrary" ruling. He took the Second Division to task especially for asserting that only one person filled out some 18,000 ballots—a task, he said, that was all but humanly impossible. "The invalidation of thousands of ballots appears suspicious and incredible. Can you imagine one person writing 17,000 to 18,000 ballots all by himself? His hand would have swelled up," he said.

Among many others, the Makati Business Club expressed serious concern about the decision. Citing her performance in office, the influential business group concluded: "In this Comelec ruling, the biggest loser is not Gov. Padaog but her constituents that are being deprived of a leader of proven administrative competence, that redoubles honest governance and exercises political will in addressing the problems confronting their community."

There's the real tragedy. The incomprehensible decision of the Comelec's Second Division effectively, and quite literally, "dis-Graced" an entire province.

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Political intrigue destroys a friendship

DAMNED IF YOU DO, DAMNED IF YOU DON'T: this was the complaint of a top Malacañang official over yesterday's ex-Secretary report over the opposition and then lifting of martial law in Maguindanao.

After the Maguindanao massacre, the government was being damned for being "too slow"; by arresting suspects in the mass murder, she said, the investigators, prosecutors, judges and law enforcers were being hampered to legal blocks put up by the Ampatuans, principal suspects in the massacre. So martial law was imposed in Maguindanao and the government was able to arrest more than 100 suspects, file charges against them, search the Ampatuan mansions and set rounding arms, and find arms caches enough to arm half a rebellion.

But there was an uproar over the imposition of martial law in response, a joint session of Congress was convened, and the Supreme Court was inundated with calls questioning the declaration of martial law.

So martial law was lifted. Still there are complaints, principally from politicians. Mala salang pinatupad Congress, sino, from now, ang may martial law.

"We saved them the trouble," she said. "We lifted martial law, which was what they were asking for. So what more do they want?"

So are their names in print and see their faces on television, that's what.

Politics is a cruel occupation. It makes enemies of friends. This is what is happening in Malacañan.

Mayor Jejomar Binay and Vice Mayor Dynee Mercado were very close friends. Like brothers. Mercado was Binay's best supporter for the mayorship of Makati. But now they are enemies because of politics. Binay is fielding his son, Councilor Junjun, to run against Mercado for mayor next year.

Neither side has said publicly the reason for the breakup. They are like an estranged couple who are not telling why they parted again.

I chanced upon Mayor Binay before the weekend and took the opportunity to ask him the "why" question.

"I am very sorry about it," said Binay. "Mercado was a brother to me. But the opposition can't be helped." That is guess for this story.

More than a year ago, Mercado asked Binay to allow him to serve as mayor just for one term, after which he would not run for reelection to give way to Junjun, the mayor's son. Binay reportedly agreed to the request.

After that, Binay consistently endorsed Mercado in his successor before Makati residents and the media.

However, in the early part of November, while Binay was out of the country, Mercado called barangay captains to a meeting, in his speech, he criticized Binay and expressed determination to run even without his support.

The statements rendered Binay, still, he did not withdraw his support for Mercado. Upon his return, Binay asked Mercado to clarify his remarks. During Binay's birthday last Nov. 11, Mercado phoned him and apologized. Later that evening, Mercado dropped by Binay's birthday party at Makati Park, and the two had a "tender" conversation.

In the last week of November, Mercado met with his prospective running-mate, but earlier, said that he is reluctant to consider the Cielo Grill. The decision of the Binay of the certificate of candidacy were issued out. The group was supposed to have Mass server before proceeding together to the Makati Comelec to file their COCs. After the meeting, Mercado personally called Binay, who was in Batangas, to report that everything was all set.

Then for two days, Mercado could not be reached by phone, even by Binay. There were reports that he met with a ranking administration official and that the offensive against Binay Mercado was also reported to be meeting with representatives of the Nacionalista Party. Binay wanted to clarify these reports, but Mercado had apparently turned off his phone.

On Thursday, Nov. 26, Binay was in Turkey. He was asked by a local official who his candidate for Makati would be. Binay replied that he was backing Mercado.

When Binay returned to Manila, he again sought out Mercado. Later that evening, a third party called Binay on his cellphone and relayed Mercado's message that he was breaking away and would run without Binay's support.

Binay was heard by the press. He felt betrayed. He had given Mercado, he said, his complete trust. He mentioned Mercado's political career. Mercado was elected councilor in 1992, but lost to Ely Montano when he ran for vice mayor in 1998. He was when he was elected by Binay to be his running mate in 2001.

The decision to fight Binay cannot be described as a matter of someone who had no choice, Binay said. On June 17, the day after Binay had informed of Mercado's decision to break away, there were reports that Mercado had formed his own ticket. Which means the stories were given to media earlier. It also means Mercado had formed his ticket earlier.

Still, Binay expressed sadness at the "bad decision of the friend" whom he raised from obscurity to the mayor's seat.

Junjun was all set to run as vice mayor based on the agreement with Mercado. He had taken time off from politics to look after his four children after the death of his wife, Ana Rizal.

Junjun has 10 years experience in local government, said Binay. He started as a youth sectoral representative before being elected councilor for the first district of Makati. In the last election, Junjun garnered the highest number of votes among the local candidates. The second highest vote-getter was Monique Lagdameo of the Legislative clan, who is Binay's candidate for Congress.

"Sayang si Mercado," Binay said. "The misunderstanding was in his group if he had stuck with me. Now he is inaccurate."

As I see it, the two are victims of political intrigue. They were victimized by the "balang" brigade that has schemed against Binay since 2004. Their mistake was that they readily believed the intrigues.

The rapper, not the rap

FROM THE GOOD BOOK TO DIOSDADO, THEY first make every Moro but that Greek saying taken on the full aspect of prophetic vision than today.

That was how it was during the twilight of martial law, when traditional Muslim' live senators started saying the most unwise things, and that is how it is today when Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's lieutenants have started saying the most senseless things. Not the least of them Lucy Gloria who last week excused her host was appointed to a Senate joint session of Congress to discuss the merits of the declaration of martial law in Maguindanao by saying she had better things to do. For chuckness, it ranks up there with such choice quotes as, "What ail we to prove for?" and "The Philippines is a rich country pretending to be poor."

I'll leave the public to react appropriately to Oliver's statement, preferably in Tagalog, and preferably in taut montage, which is not confined to printable language. Less attentively Arroyo's allies in the Senate and House of Representatives, chief of them Juan Ponce Enrile, a chief architect of the original martial law, and Prospero Nograles, the chief architect of the preposterousness of the house of Prospero, also dismissed the need for their host to personally justify what she did, by saying Eduardo Ermita and company were eminently capable of explaining the situation.

They missed the point.

The question was not whether the situation in Maguindanao warranted a declaration of martial law; the question was whether the situation in Maguindanao warranted a declaration of martial law by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The situation was incidental, the authorship central.

It would have been another matter entirely if Cory or Ramos or Erap had done so. Then the situation would have been central and the authorship incidental.

Did Gloria have the right to declare Maguindanao under martial law?

No.

Of course. Gloria lifted it, but weakened it to ignore legal points. But she promptly lifted over-

Neal H. Cruz

do was like a brother to me. But the opposition can't be helped." That is guess for this story.

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There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

grave rule law in 2006, which the declared offense. Emilio Lim's "withdrawal of support," only to have the latter turn around and hold sway in province. Something to watch out for in Maguindanao: GMA should never have been allowed to declare it then in the first place.

It's simple. Tell you allow the chief of police of a particular district who is the well-known patron, benefactor and beneficiary of a notorious syndicate to investigate that syndicate when it has just executed its enemies gangland-style, or just gangland-style quartering the world with more blood and gore than had ever been seen before? Indeed, more than just allow him to investigate another him who has also engaged and incurs him with more powers than had been seen before, including the power to make the case disappear before the public view? Still indeed, more than just give him the power to make the case disappear from the public view, give him the power to make the perps or persons who are bear witness against him for making the syndicate flourish to a point where its bosses have begun to think nothing can touch them, not the law, not public opinion, not human decency, to disappear from the face of the earth?

Something like that happened, and we would bend our heads off at the silliness of it, as the mastchain of it, 'til that was exactly what martial law in Maguindanao was.

The question was never whether martial law in Maguindanao was an excessive response or not, the question was whether martial law in Maguindanao had the appropriate scope or not. GMA is the patron, benefactor and beneficiary of the Ampatuans, a notorious clan that had just executed its enemies gangland-style, or just gangland-style quartering the Maguindanao south with more blood and gore than had been seen before. For more than a week, martial law gave GMA the power to let the rule architect in, what happened in Maguindanao, including the power to save the place up till not a peep, not a whisper, not a soul hearing a body could pass through. More than that, martial law put in GMA's hands the power of life and death—to the absolutely literal sense—over the people who can rescue her due in the source of their life, after they themselves gave her life, erected up GMA to think nothing can touch them, not the law, not public opinion, not allah himself.

Everything that proceeded from that presumed new was poisoned from it. A century century term synthesized from the Ampatuans got unleashed, you naturally didn't believe it. You didn't believe that it was not unlike the unleash of Juan Ponce Enrile during the eve of martial law, the one that made a mess of his car while allowing him to immediately survive, which was the immediate reason Marcos used for declaring martial law. Had Cory, Ramos, or Erap declared their martial law in Maguindanao, you would not have thought the unleash was designed to destroy evidence.

Just as well, Rikhard Gordon suggested that the declaration of a state of rebellion in Maguindanao, which is the basis for martial law, was to put the accused in the legal dock. Maybe so, and you followed it. Somewhere, the law may now presume the desperados rebels, with all the honor penalties it brings, quite apart from all the lofty nonsenses it rings, rather than just murderers with sadistic tendencies. Had Cory, Ramos and Erap declared that martial law in Maguindanao, you would have given them the benefit of the doubt.

In fact the only person whose presence was really needed in the past session was GMA. To answer the only intelligent question that could possibly have been raised there about the declaration of martial law in Maguindanao: "Why you?"

It was the sullen, not the situation. It was the ringer, not the ring.

It was the zipper, not the rap.

After martial law, what?

NOW THAT MARTIAL LAW HAS BEEN LIFTED, what issues remain? There are remnants of the martial law declaration that remain to be sorted out.

For one, rebellion and murder charges have been filed. What happens to them? The lifting of martial law does not terminate these charges. So, rebellion and murder are issues under the Penal Code. Prosecuting them is distinct from the government's task of justifying the imposition of martial law.

One question which is still being asked is whether the charge of rebellion should subsume, such that a rebellion can only be convicted of rebellion and not of a complex crime of rebellion with common crimes, such as in furtherance of rebellion or for some other motives, it is a separate crime.

The meaning of rebellion in the Penal Code has been amply clarified in the case of Enrile vs. Salazar decided by the Supreme Court. If the rebellion charges continue to be pursued, I anticipate that there will be a clear statement of the meaning of "armed uprising" as an element of the crime. True, the current jurisprudential literature says that the armed uprising is the element of rebellion which distinguishes it from other crimes, such as in furtherance of rebellion or for some other motives, it is a separate crime.

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This is also related to the view I espoused that it is not at all clear that rebellion in the Constitution

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

is the same as the rebellion needed for conviction under the Penal Code. It is not inbound of for the Supreme Court to give to a word in a law a meaning different from what it gives to the same word in another law. For instance, in at least one decision the Court said that "defamation, fraud, and physical injuries" in Article 13 of the Civil Code are not the same as the words "defamation," "fraud" and "physical injuries" in the Penal Code. I am of most certain that there are other examples.

Could the mere be said of rebellion in the Penal Code and rebellion in the Constitution? After all, the two laws have different objectives. The Penal Code seeks to deter and punish; Article VII, Sec. 18 of the Constitution seeks to maintain public safety. We have had instances defining the meaning of rebellion in the Penal Code in involving timeless occurrences, but none regarding rebellion in the Constitution. In the one instance that martial law was declared under the 1935 Constitution, the Court merely yielded to the judgment of the president. Moreover, in political and historical literature, rebellion is presented as a wide spectrum of varying levels of disturbance.

Will martial law lifted, however, there will be occasion to discuss this academic issue.

Incidentally, said this is now probably also an academic issue, I have always doubted that the power of the Supreme Court over a declaration of martial law is more limited than that of Congress. Aside from being able to interpret the meaning of rebellion, the Court can only review "the sufficiency of the factual basis of the proclamation." The Court cannot determine whether the choice of martial law is the correct solution to a factual situation.

Congress has a broader power. Even if the factual basis for the proclamation is sufficient, Congress may still revoke the president's decision. The Constitution does not limit the grounds upon which Congress may base its decision. However, the vote needed is a majority of all the members of Congress voting jointly. This does not seem to be easy of achievement in the present Congress.

But what is the reason for requiring joint voting? My predecessor of the 1986 Constitutional Commission is that the thinking was that the House of Representatives would be more libertarian than the Senate and thus would be more likely to go against a president with authoritarian tendencies and, by superior numbers, would be able to revoke martial law. But as someone has said, the wisest plans of mice and men have gone awry!

There is also the speculation that President Macapagal-Arroyo might save her suspicious allies through amnesty. In fact, this is not the only speculation circulating about what the President might do. Another is the pardoning of the members of the power of executive clemency the President can grant amnesty generally to political offenders, but only with the concurrence of a majority of all the members of Congress. As to pardon, the President has almost unlimited discretion to grant pardon, but only to those who have been convicted by final judgment.

Finally, in a situation of martial law there are quite a number of legally disputable matters. It is my mind, however, one thing is certain, namely that the intensity of the opposition to martial law today and the abundance of that opposition are due, to a great extent, to the fact that the President does not enjoy high credibility. And her decision to use for the House of Representatives has not served to enhance her credibility.

11/23

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

With the martial law "trial balloon" and other moves to muddle the search for justice, one can not blame the growing apprehension of the grieving relatives of the victims. "I am still confused, frustrated and angry," commented Genalin Dimaporo, younger sister of Cynthia, during a recent meeting with relatives of the victims in General Santos City. She bewailed the apparent helplessness and timidity of the government, even in meeting the death certificates of their slain loved ones.

Also, the poor handling and contamination of the massacre site by the authorities was apparent. This was noted by a fact-finding mission organized by the Freedom Portal for Filipino Journalists, Bantayog ng mga Alagad ng Sambayanan in the Philippines and the news organization Bulatlat.com, in partnership with the Free Legal Assistance Group and UPLM. Their findings also include, among others poor handling of the victims of the killings, apparent tampering of the crime scene, reliance on circumstantial rather than physical evidence, and the continuing fear gripping the relatives of the victims and possible witnesses.

Unmistakably, the Ampatuan's "reign of terror" in Maguindanao came about because they believed that they could always get away with it with the help of their patrons, and that they were "untouchables" under the Arroyo regime. Since 2001, the Arroyo administration cuddled and nurtured their greed for ruthless power and their staunch, devoted allegiance to the president was rewarded.

The Ampatuans, like all the warlords in other parts of the country were nurtured under a culture of impunity which flung open the floodgates for human rights violations that have left in their wake over 800 victims of extrajudicial killings, and many more forcibly disappeared since 2001, among the victims are 50 lawyers and judges.

Despite all condemnations (local and international) of these human rights violations, the Arroyo administration remains in a "state of denial." Thus, no one has been punished for those condemnable crimes. Local warlords and their "armies," particularly in Mindanao, serve as the very foundations on which the present government precariously stands on.

Having come to power through electoral fraud, the Arroyo administration has established and strengthened the pillars of its illegitimate rule: a militarized civilian bureaucracy, a clique of loyal and tribal generals leading it over the mass security apparatus, a horde of deadly but cute armed groups, "private political warlords," a dominated elite and a docile congress, and, a measly dose of military aid, especially from the United States. All these are responsible for the culture of impunity — the corruption and plunder, and for the mockery of the "rule of law," EPJAR said in its monthly (11/7) statement.

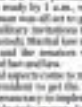
The Ampatuan massacre may yet prove to be the most atrocious and bloodiest legacy by which the Arroyo administration will be remembered, and this is why it has been done to cover-up the evidences of the crimes committed. It will certainly not accept—and it will surely resist—accountability at all costs, by all indications, President Macapagal-Arroyo intends to stay in power beyond 2010.

Unmistakably, the Ampatuans, too, set people (should not attention) let this government walk free and escape with mass murders and plunder. See the role of Comelec, for the sake of Cynthia. See the role of the 33 journalists, for the sake of the evildoers of the 11/23 massacre victims. See the role of the abusive military, for the sake of the thousand victims of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances since 2001. And for our sake. If the will not to sign, let us not vote Unidos.

How the President called the public's bluff

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



LAKSHMI ARGUELLAS, EXPOSITING IN MS. dances on Dec. 9, detailed how justice denied dawns after martial law was imposed in Maguindanao. Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer asserted that a limitation of the state of emergency was, it required the military and police to exercise restraint. Martial law, he said, permitted warrantless arrests and searches. And yet Arguellas observed that the military and police have been using the entire state gingerly after martial law, taking hours to negotiate entry into properties like Ali and Satpam's in Quezon.

I have a theory, based on Sen. Francis Pangilinan's line of questioning addressed to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita (the challenged the old administration's assertion that martial law gave the government new powers it would otherwise not enjoy: warrantless arrests and searches. Pangilinan didn't contest warrantless arrests for the crime of rebellion, but said he was surprised that the administration thought it could dispense with such warrants.

I think the military was bothered by the administration's assertion, too: but there I also think the military (the police, it seems, were just clueless overall) was more inclined to scrupulously ensure no abuses in flouting of the law would take to conduct during martial law. The painstaking negotiations to enter the important properties indicated that even without a warrant, anything discovered would remain legally admissible: the military didn't barge in, it secured permission.

It obviously is not this event (Ulu all accounts, the Palace had the votes in Congress to block the revocation of martial law, and felt reasonably confident that the Supreme Court would not strike it down, it couldn't risk waiting in agony only to end up the way Fernando Lopez' hands judging like a goldfish in the face of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's question on what exactly were the legal impediments to the elections if martial law were lifted.

Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. suggested, after martial law was lifted last November, that in truth all that martial law effects is "shock and awe," that is, its psychological impact is what matters. Which is why President Macapagal-Arroyo had to impose it in Ilocos Sur and Maguindanao: by coming to the Ampatuans' area had no idea what it really meant or how long it might last.

He may be correct. Arguellas reported that on this morning after martial law was proclaimed, Datu Ampatuan Jr. was ready by 1 a.m., while MMDA Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan was all set to go by 3 a.m., neither resisted: military intervention to be taken into particular consideration. Martial law is ultimate political bluff, and the senators were calling the bluff in terms of bar and bat.

Two other psychological aspects come to mind. First, the ability of the President to get the military (the police, it seems, were just clueless) overall was more inclined to scrupulously ensure no abuses in fleeting of the law would take to conduct during martial law. The painstaking negotiations to enter the important properties indicated that even without a warrant, anything discovered would remain legally admissible: the military didn't barge in, it secured permission.

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If

As guilty as the Ampatuans by command responsibility

THE GRUESOME, INHUMAN AND SAVAGE massacre of 57 people, including defenseless women, journalists and lawyers (and their women and children) before anyone could be killed in cold blood in Maguindanao last Nov. 23, are crimes neither heaven nor earth will forgive.

These heinous and barbaric deeds perpetrated by more than 100 suspects and lorded in the private army of the powerful Ampatuan clan in Maguindanao, an orderly removed in the press, are war crimes, crimes against peace and crimes against humanity punishable by death by martial law under military and international law.

The Ampatuan warlords of Maguindanao are close political allies, cronies and collaborators of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the Supra Pandatoc ostensibly holding office in Malacañang after stealing the 2004 presidential election with the generous help of the Ampatuans, warlords who gave her more than a 200,000-duty vote lead over her opponent Fernando Poe Jr.

In return, Mr. Arroyo's Armed Forces of the Philippines (and Philippine National Police) provided the Ampatuan warlords with arms and allowed them to keep a murderous private army and rule Maguindanao with iron and bloody fist, and to monopolize political power and corruption in the local, provincial and regional governments of Maguindanao for the last nine years of Mr. Arroyo's illegitimate presidency. This according to Marites Vitug of the independent NewsHour in a TV interview on its transaction Nov. 28.

Thus, the wholesale massacre of innocent civilians, which is unparalleled in cruelty and brutality in Philippine postwar history can be laid on the doorstep of Malacañang, and the blood of 57 people crying to the heavens for justice are squarely on the hands of Mr. Arroyo and the evil and bloody clan of warlords in Maguindanao she enabled for evil political ends.

Aside from the immediate disarming of the barbarous private militia of the Ampatuan warlords, aside from the immediate arrests, summary trial, punishment and execution of the perpetrators of the Maguindanao massacre, aside from the removal from office of the duplicitous and plotting Maguindanao provincial director-emergency-turn-in-the-administered by an independent civilian local government headed by non-partisan and professional military and police forces, we demand the immediate dismantling of all warlords (nationwide and the immediate resignation from office of any cronies as president for the bloody massacre forfeited the privilege of command responsibility for wholesale violations of human rights under her watch, and for monstrous crimes and unpardonable corruption in office.

—JOE SOLMAN,
president,
Alliance sa Pagtatanggol ng Konstitusyon,
Inst ng Pintor st 644 Kalaw ang BNE,
77 Investigator St.,
Malabon City 1475

Dare to win. Be an Inquirer. INQUIRER

MEDICard PHILIPPINES
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asec

ASECASIA, INC. recently signed its corporate healthcare agreement with MEDICard PHILIPPINES, INC. (Seated, L-R) MEDICard's Leo S. Benitez (EVP and General Manager) and Dr. Nestor D. Mendoza (President) with Asecasia's Ramon L. Lee (President and Chairman) and Jose T. Dungao (VP Finance). Standing (L-R) Asecasia's Atty. Alfredo A. Antonio (Corporate Secretary), Atty. Antonio C. Sevilla (Asst. Corporate Secretary), Atty. Ma. Victoria A. Soliven (Chief Compliance Officer), Asecasia's Ramon T. Diaz (VP Operations Manager), Asecasia's Dr. Ma. Vera Victoria Reyes, Asecasia's Atty. Katrina R. Aquino (VP Marketing) and Asecasia's Tom M. Sevilla (Executive Secretary).

THIS demonstration was held last Dec. 13 in front of Quezon City Hall, as part of the global movement calling for immediate action on global change.

Recycling, waste reduction forgotten solutions to climate change

WE CALL ATTENTION TO AN IMPORtant but under-recognized issue in the climate change negotiations: the significant potential of recycling and waste reduction, and the critical need by labor "issue-to-energy" solutions such as incinerators and landfill gas projects.

In the developing world, "waste-pickers" and "recyclers" already contribute substantially to emissions reduction and are ready to do more, if given the recognition and support they merit and deserve.

Recycling is one of the cheapest, quickest and easiest ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developed, rapid and developing nations alike. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through recycling is 20 percent cheaper than through energy efficiency and 50 percent cheaper than through wind power. The potential of recycling, composting, and other waste prevention techniques to reduce emissions is enormous. Each family that recycles and composts reduces emissions as much as if it stopped driving its family car.

Recycling has major economic benefits, employing at least 75 million people in developing countries. Even in developed countries, recycling provides 10 times the jobs per tons of waste as incineration and landfills.

Waste-pickers working in the informal economy are at the heart of sustainable recycling systems in the developing world, and municipalities are ready to tap the expansion of recycling. Evidence from developing countries shows that when municipalities try to bypass waste-pickers by granting contracts to private waste management companies, these programs often fail over-light and tend to job loss, wasted public resources, fewer recycling rates, and increased greenhouse gas emissions.

At the Great Development Mechanisms (CDM) is supporting incinerators and landfills which compete with waste-pickers and recycling programs. These projects increase greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen the waste-to-energy approach of the developed world. Waste-pickers need financial and technical support from a non-market based financial mechanism. Therefore, we ask the government to

• recognize the critical and productive role that the informal recycling sector contributes to climate change mitigation and even benefits economy;

• oppose in the National Climate Trust that will invest in resource recovery programs that ensure decent livelihoods for all workers and makes it the recycling economy, and is diversity accessible to waste-pickers and other informal sector groups;

• exclude waste disposal technologies (including incinerators, landfill gas and incinerator variants such as pyrolysis, gasification and plasma) from the CDM and other climate funds.

For more information, please see www.no-burn.org/wtp.

—ED PALALLOS, Southeast Asia Coalition; RANDY CLEOPAS, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives; GLORIA TOLENTINO, Cavite Green Coalition; ROY ANDRES, Earth Renewal Project; REXCI ESTRELA, Health Care Without Harm; WILSON JOSOL, Ayuda sa Kalikasan; RAY REYES, Mother Earth Foundation; ESMYR BARAZO, November 17 Movement; GERARD BADION, Saliksik; GISELA PINGGANDER, Zero Waste Philippines

Just being transparent to members of GSIS

THE REPLIES TO THE LETTER OF IBM external relations staff Gwen L. Camargo, where he claimed that the allegations of delayed benefits are the fault of IBM, are laughable. He also said that SSS is being used by the top 25 banks in the world.

We are happy that IMF would for these banks, but the problem is DBP is not working for the GSIS. What we cried to find answers, but we have got none except from Chairperson Corazon de la Paz-Bersamin and the GSIS spokesperson Rico Basilio who said that the GSIS is causing the truth and downplaying the GSIS system. Perhaps, IBM head, his task for us to whom future allegations against the GSIS is coming from.

That aside, we leave this matter to the courts. What is important now is to appeal to our members of the scope the GSIS is taking to solve its problems. Transparency, after all, is the basis of your advertising, no? IBM

—ELLA E. VALENCIERA, vice president,
Public Relations and Communications Office,
Government Service Insurance System

Using God to advance political ambitions

"There is no place for any boss save in God's coffin."
—J. Bell

HEAVEN IS SLOPPY, POLITICS IS sensational. And the Church is sometimes, almost and beyond the most, caught up in the fray. Sometimes, the feeling that design, however, unwise "holy" personalities have the insatiable lure irresistible the divine order and downgrade. The Church by blessing up with love and let they do not belong to.

The Church has no intelligence, ethical mandate expansive and tender guidance to the people and governance. Without the Church the whole country would have long collapsed into a biblical Dead Sea.

But where do we draw the line?

The Church serving into political Twists and. My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."—John 18:36

What is surely obvious, though, is the fact that some "spiritual leaders" go as far as "politicizing" God's work and God's people at the very least and accordance of mission-day statements, using "Christ" and the "altar" as a vehicle for their own selfish "Christian agenda" and political ambitions.

Sad hope.

—SENEN VALENZUELA,
vendorsidewalk@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos in the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Pioneer and Mercedes Streets, City of Makati, or send a fax to this 897-4753, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

DENR tells Pulag tribes: Help save mossy forest

KABAYAN, BENGUET—DETERmined to save Mt. Pulag's mossy forests and threatened species from further destruction, environment officials visited one of the coldest upland villages here on Friday to convince indigenous communities not to convert forests into vegetable gardens.

But the consultation with residents of Barangay Ballay held near Lake Tabeyo, one of the trails leading to Mt. Pulag's peak, has caught the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in a bind—the assertion of the government's right to preserve forest lands against the people's determination to farm since it was their only means of livelihood.

Ernesto Albas, Mt. Pulag park superintendent, said the dilemma might compel the DENR to take the option. It least wanted—use the farmers and assert the government's proclamation that Mt. Pulag is off limits to plantations overnight.

"If we plan the area covered by the presidential proclamation to the letter, almost all farms would be found within the protected boundaries," Albas said.

But as a matter of policy, the DENR has yet to pursue its bid to reclaim the encroached forests based on legal documents, Albas said.

This is because the government wants to forge an alliance with the communities so as to use and manage the forests wisely, she said.

The late former President Corazon Aquino issued Proclamation No. 75 on Feb. 27, 1987, which declared Mt. Pulag as a national park.

Pulag, the country's second highest peak at 2,922 meters above sea level, covers 11,300 hectares that straddle Ifugao, Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet.

The DENR and other government representatives came here last week in talk to more than 100 people in the village who learned the cold to gather at Lake Tabeyo, estimated to be more than 2,500 meters above sea level.

Pricilla Basali, DENR-Cordillera planning officer, said the area devoted to agriculture just before the mossy forests must not exceed seven hectares.

He said the DENR would soon establish a buffer zone to delineate the extent of the mossy forests from the areas already planted with vegetables.

But this did not sit well with members of the community, who said the government must provide alternative means of livelihood to discourage them from cutting more trees to give way to vegetable farms.

Sixto Mitas, Ballay village chair, said many of those with farms near the mossy forests have lived there for many years.

They would protest if their farms were removed in the name of preserving the park, he said.

Ballay is home to 321 families (2,806 people), mostly farmers, Mitas said.

Mitas agreed to the DENR plan to conduct a comprehensive survey next year on areas believed to have been encroached and agree on common measures on how to protect them.

Alfredo Pilay, a farmer, said he bought his farm, which is within the forest, "from someone else a long time ago."

He said he may not have the documents to prove the ownership but he said he has the right to dates ownership based on good faith.

"It's the only property my children could inherit from me," Pilay, 67, said.

Noel Aberkeles, also a farmer, said the mossy forests near Mt. Pulag did not have markers to warn farmers not to go beyond. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Bohol traders hit PASG inspection

By Kit Bagojo
Inquirer Visayas

TAGBILARAN CITY—BOHOL BUSINESSmen are criticizing the disruptions and delays in the transport of their cargoes caused by a group claiming to be agents of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group (PASG) led by the brother of gubernatorial candidate Conie Montero.

The Bohol Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BCCI) on Friday expressed "grave concerns" over the delays in transporting their goods and commodities after a PASG team assigned in the previous unannounced days, Dec. 9 the passage of all cargo vans and trucks at the Tagbilaran City Port.

A resolution adopted Friday by the business group decried the manner by which the anti-smuggling operatives, headed by its director Jose Rommel Montero, conducted inspections of trucks and delivery vehicles carrying goods and commodities which resulted into hours of delay.

The chamber said that the "unannounced inspection" conducted by Montero and his men "resulted to the interruption of the normal flow of delivery of basic commodities to the consuming public."

The PASG team led by Montero, popularly known as Rommel Montero and younger brother of Bohol gubernatorial aspirant actor Tessie Montero, flagged down trucks at the city wharf purportedly to check for smuggled goods.

Interviewed over radio station dyHO, Montero explained that their operation was part of their "intensified and heightened gathering" to check if there were smuggling activities in the province.

When asked how he came to be deputized as anti-smuggling agent, Montero said he was designated by the PASG central office as a director since July this year.

He pointed out that the conduct of inspection at the city port is within the mandate of the PASG under President Macapagal-Arroyo's Executive Order No. 624.

The BCCI protested the "inspections" saying it was an inconvenience to both the business community and the consuming sector.

"This is the first time that the city and the province have experienced this setback which creates anxiety, confusion and negative impression on consumers," Chamber resolution said.

Informed of the concerns of the businessmen, Montero apologized for the inconvenience.

"We are authorized by law to conduct inspection of cargoes and vehicle as part of the nationwide campaign to curb smuggling," Montero stressed.

In an emergency meeting called by the BCCI Thursday at the Metrocentre Hotel, Tagbilaran port manager Manuel Bolocaro informed the businessmen that it was only when there was an intelligence report of anomaly could there be an interception of cargo transport operations.

Since the inspections, the flow of cargo trucks at the port slowed down as PASG operatives waited through each vehicle and asked for official receipts of goods.

The BCCI said it has always been the practice "since time immemorial" that delivery drivers and truckers could only present the "bill of lading" because the official receipts are in the company offices.

Some drivers, reportedly the delay to their employers, hinted suspicions on the conduct of the inspections.

At least 10 men were assigned as anti-smuggling team members in the province, Montero claimed.

He said they all went through training before being deputized as PASG agents.

Bohol businessmen suggested that the men claiming to be agents of PASG should present proper identification and deputation papers or they would not be objects of suspicion.

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Abra youths lead campaign for peaceful polls

BAGUIO CITY—ABRA. A PROvince known for political violence during elections, celebrated its second annual "Week of Peace" where elders, church leaders and politicians engaged in a dialogue about ending political conflicts.

This runs the "Week of Peace," which ran from Dec. 4 to 10, highlighted the Abra youth's role in peacemaking.

In a Dec. 5 assembly, 57 college students offered to monitor and report about the political environment there similar the Bantaoay, Dapeldec, Bantoccah (Mt. Val), six Ilocos, 12 provincial" program organized by the Abra Community Association and Broadcasting Club (ACBC).

The students were black ribbons.

Marlene Bella, ACBC coordinator, said the ribbons symbolized their sympathy for the 57 victims of the Maguindanao massacre, as well as a reminder that Abra is no stranger to election-related violence.

Some Abra youths hosted a more positive outlook for the 2010 polls.

At an inter-generation speech competition on Dec. 5, the winning entry delivered by a student from the Abra Valley College discussed why Abra's progress and development would ultimately give birth to true peace among localpoliticians.

Last week, a new study about the province's election-related violence was presented in a workshop by the Ateneo School of Government's Political Democracy and Reform Cluster's Program.

The Ateneo School of Government returned to the same study in its Dec. 3 condemnation of the Maguindanao massacre, which it termed "an incident."

Citing the study, the statement said Ateneo found "not all too familiar cases" for election violence...the long field on power of a handful of political families and their use of arms.

"The families have built well-oiled machineries to control and monopolize power—power with strong connections to the State and to many segments of society ... As in Abra and likely in Negros Occ., elections tend to devolve in Maguindanao. And, as in Abra and likely in Negros Occ., the presence of long-standing political families that have used violence to stay in power and who are protected by politicians at the national level," it said.

Chief Supt. Orlando Bonalo, Cordillera police director, had alerted the Commission on Elections to an initial police evaluation of Abra's security situation which indicated that the province was once again on the verge of "potential violence" due to gun ban, political rivalries.

But youth participation may turn the tide once their break the culture of violence, said Indunil Bangquilat, president of the Abra Cordillera Bloc of Students.

"If we want change [for our] province ... it is about time we [make our culture of indifference] because we all can do something good for our province," he said.

Abra Gov. Enrique Bersamin also pledged a peaceful campaign and election next year, as he shared ranks with other northern Luzon politicians to support Luisa Jones' OIC-martial-leaner Gilbert Teodoro Jr.

"As responsible leaders, we have pledged as to [Teodoro] that we will do electoral exercises [so] we would take place in Abra [in and out] electoral," Bersamin said in a statement.

He said support for Teodoro has been strengthened by his presidency platform "with its emphasis on economic development projects" in the country's periphery.

"[Teodoro] knows fully well that developed rural communities are the backbone of a strong national economy," Bersamin said.

Earlier, Teodoro won the backing of local leaders in Laguna, Isabela and Ilocos Norte.

Eleanor Cabreros, Inquirer Northern Luzon, with a report from Artha Kim Paredes, contributor

Probe plunder raps vs Ampatuans, gov't urged

From page A1

impression were able to get a bit of evasions. "Could their income per for their statements that was around and their annual followers?"

Anomalous circumstances

Pimentel said the P1.7 billion in agrarian reform funds were released during the first seven months of the year under "anomalous circumstances."

The funds were channeled by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) in five separate installments upon the recommendation of Agusnin Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, he said.

Pimentel said the funds were released despite the failure of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the ARMM to submit a listing of specific projects as required by Administration office.

Not covered by CARP

Pimentel also questioned the basis for the release of the money to the ARMM, then headed by Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, considering that the autonomous region does not fall under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)."

He said official records showed that of the P1.7 billion given to the ARMM, P600 million went to Maguindanao.

The ARMM consists of the provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. It has a budget of P30 billion this year and shares the same amount in 2010.

Although the huge lump sums in agrarian rebates fund were released to the ARMM, there are widespread complaints that no actual development projects have been undertaken," Pimentel said.

He said there was strong ground to believe that the money had been misused.

"They could be one of the probable sources of the fabulous but unexplained wealth of the Ampatuans. This could partly explain why they were able to acquire a lot of properties, several mansions in Maguindanao, Davao City, Metro Manila and other places," the senator added.

Pimentel said he had exposed this illegal fund diversion several months ago, but Pangandaman, as well as Mohagher, and DBM officials, did not bother to give any explanation.

A listing of the special allotment release order (Saro) and notice of cash allocation (NCA) under the CARP he said, showed that the following amounts were released to the ARMM from February to July:

- P330 million on Feb. 13.
- P331.7 million, also on Feb. 13.
- P332.5 million on June 10.
- P400 million on June 2.
- P473 million on July 1.

Paging Ombudsman

Pimentel urged the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate these transactions by seeking an explanation from the Ampatuans, along with the finance officials of the DAR and the ARMM, and even the resident auditor of the Commission on Audit (COA).

"The Office of the Ombudsman should not drop on the job. If there is evidence of fault/crimes, it should. She plunder cases against the Ampatuans and their accomplices. They would not be able to build those palatial mansions without the money stolen from government coffers," he said.

Pimentel said it was "unconscionable" that the people of Maguindanao and the other ARMM provinces "are being deprived of development projects and public services they are entitled to because they are regularly receiving funds from various sources."

Maguindanao is one of the poorest provinces in the country.

Internal revenue allotment

Pimentel said that aside from the annual budget of the ARMM, its provinces get their share of the Internal Revenue Allotment and development aid from donor countries and multilateral financing institutions.

Before Congress convened last week a joint session to discuss the martial law proclamation, Malacañang said it was meeting to freeze the assets of the Ampatuan clan.

The freeze order might be forthcoming, according to Justice Secretary Agnes De-remulders. She said the Anti-Money Laundering Council was looking into the clan's assets.

Money laundering is a crime in which proceeds of an unlawful activity are transferred, making them appear to have come from legitimate sources.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said he had asked the COA and the DBM to form "special groups" to initially review how the funds used by ARMM development were spent.

It's a weird, wild, wonderful world

From page A1

Award: Given with graduation sessions.

• A Norwegian man landed himself in hot water when police caught him having sex with his girlfriend as the result of over 130 kilometers per hour through a 100-kph zone on a highway near Oslo.

• Old technology came to the aid of the new in a first-class prison where guards found that inmate were getting mobile phones flown in to them strapped to carrier pigeons.

• Life imitated fiction when prison copies of George Orwell's book "1984" were mysteriously deleted from the Amazon company's new electronic reading devices. Apologizing, the firm said it had not been circulating Orwell's sinister "Big Brother," but had simply realized that it didn't have the rights to sell the title.

• An 11-month-old boy accidentally dialed an emergency number while playing with a home telephone in the Canadian province of British Columbia. When police arrived, they assumed the boy's father who was growing marijuana plants in his home.

Higher milk production

• Farmers who pay individual attention to their cows, notably by giving them names, are rewarded with higher milk productions, a team at Newcastle University in England said, quoting the results of a poll.

• Tired of seeing his grandparents give weird and wonderful names to their offspring, a Catholic priest in Croatia offered monetary rewards worth around 135 euros ($195) to anyone who chose good old-fashioned monikers such as Ivana, Petra, Luka or Ivan.

• "There's probably no limit—now stop worrying and enjoy your life," proclaimed an ad campaign backed by atheists and aimed at London commuters. Religious groups were not amused, but the advertising standards body ruled that the posters were acceptable.

• Not several hours, a publicity stunt increased US tourist numbers—by getting killed to broadcast live footage of the Hyperactive dragonfalcon feared to be carrying a 6-year-old boy. The parents later admitted that it was a hoax perpetrated in order to hold their own reality television show.

Victimized by violence

• A group of Greek islanders organized a collection to rebuild the newspaper kiosk of a 74-year-old woman that had burned down during a riot. They were resolved to. "We should support a fellow human being victimized by violence," said the group, which collected 15,000 euros (19,000 dollars) for her destroyed kiosk.

• A British academic who spent seven years collecting the dung of rare lizards in the Philippines was devastated when a cleaning team threw it out of his laboratory with the trash. "To some people it might have been just lizard shit ... but to me it represented years of painstaking research," he said.

• Prince of a baseball team in the Japanese city of Osaka scored a rare cycle hit a run in the 23. last final was Colonel Amidon that they had thrown him a 15 years before. They had buried the object into the water in honor of a successful player who they said looked like the good colonel—but were chastised when they did so, their team's fortunes had plummeted. Recovered from the mud, the figurine, duly cleaned in a Hanoi ceremony.

• Irish police were scratching their heads to find out how a single Polish driver whose name had been recorded as "Prawo Jazdy" could have dodged up to many traffic offences—until they realized that the phrase simply means "Driving License" in Polish.

Red-faced Americans

• Hoping to symbolize a new era in US-Russian relations, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton handed what was billed as a "reset" button to her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. But the Americans were red-faced when they realized that the Russian word printed on the large red device actually meant "overload."

• A Hong Kong financial journalist was an eyewitness with financial whizz-kid the demise of HSBC bank plunged 24 percent at the close of trading that she burst into tears while on the air. She later explained that she was upset at the consequences for small investors, and did not hold shares herself.

• The town's mayor of a village in northeast England decided not to repair the many potholes in their roads because they feared drivers to go more slowly. The safety-conscious councilors were overruled by a regional body.

• A 39-year-old Briton beat off over 30,000 competitors to win what European officials named as the "best job in the world"—spending six months as a caretaker on a tropical island of the Great Barrier Reef.

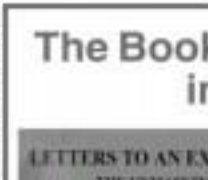
'Boats 4 Justice'

• A British woman won a famous victory—and lots of publicity—in forcing a supermarket chain to stop charging more for large sizes of bras than for smaller ones. The group she founded on the Facebook Internet site was called "Boats 4 Justice."

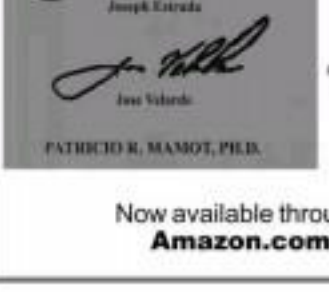
• One of dozens of British members of Parliament caught up in a scandal over illegal claims for expenses had to admit that he had been using public money to buy supplies to ornamental fish house on his private estate. Announcing his resignation, he had to admit that the ducks had not overfished the thing.

• Australian officials in charge of handing out cash as part of an economic stimulus plan accidentally credited the accounts of 16,000 people who were no longer living. Local media dubbed the beneficiaries "The grateful dead."

-AFP



The Book to Stop Erap in 2010



"I urge our voters to be vigilant and to exercise judiciously their right to vote. To select upon soul-searching and guidance of their conscience the best of the presidential candidates **EXCEPT FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH 'ERAP' ESTRADA.**

Patricio R. Mamot, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief, Filipino Times, New York
(2006-2009)

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Pag-IBIG Housing Loans Up by 38%

As of October 2005, the Pag-IBIG Fund has released P56.91 billion in total loans under its End-User Financing Program, 38% higher over the same period last year.

New Affordable Housing Loans in the Philippines

Under the leadership of VP and HUDCC Chairman Nok "Kabayan" De Castro, Pag-IBIG housing loans have some of the lowest interest rates in the Philippine market today, especially on loan packages targeting low- and average-income earners. Coupled with longer repayment periods—up to 30 years for all loan amounts—borrowers can avail of loans with monthly amortizations that are lower than average house rentals.

Multi-Purpose Loans Increase by 10%

From January to October 2005, the Fund disbursed P27.6 billion in Multi-Purpose Loans (MPL) for the immediate financial needs of 1,040,700 members, topping its 2005 MPL for the same period by 10%. In the last two years, more than 3,000,000 members have benefited from Pag-IBIG's MPL Program.

Calamity Loans Up by 196%

From January to October 2005, the Fund disbursed P12,000 billion in Calamity Loans to 760,000 members in calamity-stricken areas, topping its 2004 Calamity Loans for the same period by 196%.

Pag-IBIG Fund was also able to give out a total of 150 scholarships: 100 for degree courses and 100 for vocational courses. Ang mga anak ng Pag-IBIG members could be sent to school from among all the qualified applicants.

Biggest calamity loan provision; more benefits for members in times of calamity

Pag-IBIG has once again proven its dynamism and responsiveness to the needs of its members during calamities. When typhoons Shirley, Frasing and Gardo hit the country this year, whom received the worst flooding in history, the Fund opened its doors to members who needed to avail of much needed Calamity Loans.

As of December 7, 2005, the Fund has approved an unprecedented P1.07 billion in calamity loans serving almost 730,000 members. This represents a hefty increase of 1,885% over last year's figure of P54,200 billion, making the Fund the biggest calamity loan provider in the country.

Aside from the above loan amounts, some successful effects of the typhoons on our shorelines can be seen.

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Meteor showers to peak tonight

THE ANNUAL GEMINID meteor shower is expected to reach its peak tonight.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the Geminids meteor shower could be seen in the eastern horizon radiating from the constellation of Gemini.

Pagasa said that as many as 40 meteors per hour may be seen during its peak on the night of Dec. 14 into Dec. 15.

The website astronomyconnection.com considers the Geminids one of the best meteor showers of the year "and never seem to disappoint observers."

The meteor shower usually started to be visible on Dec. 4 but the skies were mostly cloudy then. The Geminids is expected to last until Dec. 16.

The Geminids first appeared in the 1860s, scientists have yet to determine its origin.

But according to the website, in 1983 observers at the Infrared Observatory in California spotted an asteroid they designated 3200 Phaethon moving in an orbit almost identical to the Geminids, leading some believe the asteroid could be the parent of the Geminids. — Alyssa Raga

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INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez speaks to the young read-along participants in her earlier. INQUIRER chair Maria Ressa, looks on. KIMI ECHA

Stories, gifts ...

From page A1

Luca, 8, read Angie Rivera's "Eliel" published by Adarna House, a story about a young boy coping with dyslexia.

The mother-daughter duction of Prieto and Romualdez read Ellery Ann Deibuerto-Flavier's "My Mother, Friend," published by ABC Educational Development Center. The story narrates the friendly of two friends who belong to different religions.

Almonte storyteller Lenore Papa started the session with Rhandee Garlitos' "May Pigsaw Sa Aming Bahay," the grand prize winner of the 2009 Philippine Board on Books for Young People's Salanga Prize.

The book, illustrated by Frederick Garcon and published by Adarna, is about a young boy who got acquainted with his father on overseas Filipino workers who had just come home.

Ruth Aves, a regular Inquirer Read Along storyteller, read Mike Tobias Papa's "Same sa Hiningle," also by Adarna, a story about a young girl's reading session early last summer—if all places—the flea market.

High school students from the Sophia School in Mayumunyan, Bulacan, led by their principal Ann Alfonso, also read "Ang Bandera Ismol," written by Rene Villanueva and illustrated by Jimmuel Naval, which details the adventures of a family of pigs who learn the importance of friends and community in times of crisis.

Sophia students of the school's pre-club performed a dance number while juggling balls suspended from a string called "poi."

Free stuffed toys

At the end of the session, the children were given stuffed toys courtesy of the Guardian Angels of America Foundation, led by its founder, Lee Warren, and Manila coordinator Dr. Philip Cruz.

"It's my first time to attend a read-along session," Reyneza said. "And it's so fun! I really enjoyed the stories and I can't wait for the kids-related items, too."

For his part, Cruz said: "I think literacy projects are worthwhile. We're glad for Inquirer to spearheading this. It's great."

Since 2002, the foundation has been giving toys to child patients at El Gonzalez in Metro Manila. This year, it received 3,000 toys donated by Filipinos living in Los Angeles.

Dance number

Grace Bonilla, 12, a regular Inquirer Read-Along participant, said Saturday's session was her favorite so far.

"I think it was really special. More stories were read. There was a dance number, which I thought was interesting and I got a free stuffed toy," she said, while showing her new teddy bear.

Nine-year-old Jocelyn Estrada, one of the children brought to the session by the Makati Sporting Association, said: "It was very enjoyable. I learned the importance of treating your parents."

Philip Reyes, also from the association, said he learned a lot from the session. "I learned about the importance of respect and tolerance. I also learned that you can be friends with anyone, regardless of your differences background," the 9-year-old said.

Marie Kaiserd, a German volunteer for Eduksyon Kabalikat sa Barangay, accompanied 20 children from Bistro in Tondo, Manila, to the session. "I really liked the performance of Sophia School, they captivated the attention of the kids."

Kaiserd also praised the Pizza Hut employees that accompanied the children.

Aside from text, the children received gift packs containing Adarna books and books donated by Gig and the Amazing Interpreters Foundation, Inc., who recently donated over 1,000 children's books to the institute.

Activity books, courtesy of Vibal Publishing, were also given away as prizes during the question-and-answer portions.

More read-along sessions

Attending the session were youth directors, mostly Inquirer Kabalikat members and coordinated youth leaders from San Mateo, Pangasinan, who plan to replicate the Inquirer Read-Along program in their area.

Hosted by Libre editor in chief Dida dela Vega and Joanne Impanis editor Ruth Reyneza, the session was held in cooperation with Makati Foundation, Makati Sporting Association and Inquirer Group.

A special read-along will be held on Dec. 18 at the Rizaliana Hindi Aabihin hall of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Los Baños, Laguna.

The next regular read-along session at the Inquirer office will be on Jan. 9 at 10 a.m. Interested participants may contact Ellen Cayanan at 9078626 loc. 528. Show me at a first count. Bob Ruiz and Ruth Reyneza report from Sehoon Quezada, Inquirer Research.

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BDO

Agusan gunmen free 46 hostages

From page A1

The ending to the ordeal was a last piece of good news for the country's volatile southern region, following a political massacre last month that left 57 people dead, the beheading of a man last week in an unrelated abduction, and a Moro guerrilla attack on the Basilan provincial jail, also yesterday that enabled 11 inmates to escape.

The rain-soaked hostages, aged 17 to 62, were driven down the mountain in a military truck to a hospital in Prosperidad, the provincial capital.

"Thank you very much, thank you very much," one of the weary hostages said in front of reporters before military escorts took him and others away for medical checkups and a debriefing.

Earlier yesterday, Gene and other government officials met Salinga leader Dado Peter in a restaurant to broker a deal after the hostages had spent three nights sleeping outside at the gunmen's lair.

FREED HOSTAGES Rescuers assist villagers who were freed hours earlier by their captors as they arrive at the hospital in Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur AFP/Ted Aljibe

Pig, chickens sacrificed

In a more bizarre effort to placate the kidnappers, negotiators yesterday also brought in tribal leaders to sacrifice animals as part of a ritual demanded by Peter, a member of the Manobo tribe, in overnight talks.

One black pig and three chickens were slaughtered, while 10 boiled eggs and 10 bottles of local wine were offered to the gods.

After the ceremony, Gene took Dexter to a local restaurant where he met in private with Gov. Sidcoreno Plaza and the duo was struck to give the kidnapper community from police arrest.

"All members of [the government] crime committee signed a document in front of Peter where they stated that all members of the group would be arrested or detained," Gene said.

Instead, the issue will be referred to el. dent of Peter's tribe for settlement—which is allowed under local laws governing indigenous groups in the Philippines.

Free, at last

The hostages—44 men and two women—were freed at 4:45 p.m.

The gunmen—former government armed militiamen—surrendered their assault rifles, grenades and ammunition.

"Declaring officially that all hostages are free. Yes, at last," Gene said in a cell phone message.

Looking tired but relieved, the nearly nude hostages waved and smiled at journalists and army troops waiting at a nearby muddy village.

All wore new white shirts given by government officials who fetched them.

How it began

The tribal clan of Jun Talusi has accused Peter of killing his son and three relatives in February. Amateur he would be arrested, Peter took some 75 villagers hostage on Thursday.

Some of the hostages were freed that same day while a few escaped. Nine more hostages were released on Friday. On Saturday, 46 hostages were left in the gunmen's hands.

Peter, in an earlier interview, said he was puzzled why only he was being arrested when Talusi's group, he claimed, had killed 21 of his relatives last year.

Gene said Talusi and his followers also had outstanding arrest warrants for murder. He said a long-standing dispute over land led to the killings.

Bloodless rescue

"Akoy sobrecatar ng emil. Di fich bone ina been retained from my friend's... What happened here was an isolated incident," Gene told the inquirer. "I never stopped praying to God that this will be solved [illegible]."

At a village centre, families of the civilian had been waiting for the hostages since yesterday morning.

The hostages had been held in an abandoned hut at a clearing on a thickly forested mountain about two kilometers from the village where they were abducted.

"The release of these people represents the start of the end of peaceful effort by the government and the security forces," Gene said. "To do drastic measures would only have jeopardized our vital work for a bloodless rescue mission."

In the four days of captivity, troops had used to encircle the kidnappers to pressure them to release the captives.

The hostages will be reunited with their families as soon as doctors declare them fit, Gene said. Several suffered dehydration because of mild fever and high blood pressure.

At the hospital, Regil Bautista, 27, lost consciousness, while a visibly weak Jose Sanchez, 52, had to be administered dextrose.

Sanchez said he left work because he and the other hostages hadn't eaten since morning.

"I am happy because I'm already free," said Sanchez, a father of six children. He said Peter had treated him and the other hostages well. With a report from AFP

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Globe links the Philippines to Southeast Asia Japan Cable System

Globe, a leading telecommunications company in the Philippines, participates in the new Southeast Asia Japan Cable (SJC) System, the highest capacity system in the world. The SJC will further increase the capacity and boost the resiliency of the Globe network.

The SJC system will initially link Singapore, Hongkong, Indonesia, Philippines and Japan. It uses wavelength transmission technology with design capacity of 11 Terabits per second (Tbps) that could be upgraded to 25 Tbps, the highest in the world. About 1.2 Tbps to 2 Tbps will be going through the Philippine branch.

Globe is the exclusive SJC landing party in the Philippines. This is the fifth major investment of Globe in submarine cable systems, spread across the Trans-Asian region and connected to diverse Trans-Pacific cable systems that bring traffic from the Philippines to international destinations.

The innovative design of the SJC allows for lowest latency paths out of the Philippines to Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore, with onward connectivity to the US, providing customers faster and better internet experience.

"It has always been Globe's thrust to provide its customers with superior experience by delivering pioneering innovations to the Philippines. The investment of Globe in the SJC project is a testament of our commitment to provide our customers with the best connected network so they get uninterrupted and quality service," said Ernest L. Cu, President and CEO of Globe.

"Globe's participation in the SJC project supports the continued growth of our broadband services, and further enhances our capabilities in supporting the offshoring and outsourcing industry in the Philippines," said Orlando Cerrer, Carrier Services Head of Globe. Cerrer further added that, "Significantly upgraded bandwidth, coupled with dramatically lower unit costs, provide fuel for more internet services, and provides even more choices for business customers who need to connect internationally."

The investment of Globe in SJC will connect the Philippines to the main SJC system and enable cost-effective and resilient connectivity to other countries and other submarine cable systems. Also, the SJC project's unique and innovative ownership structure enables Globe to maintain control over its capacity for increased security and reliability to its network.

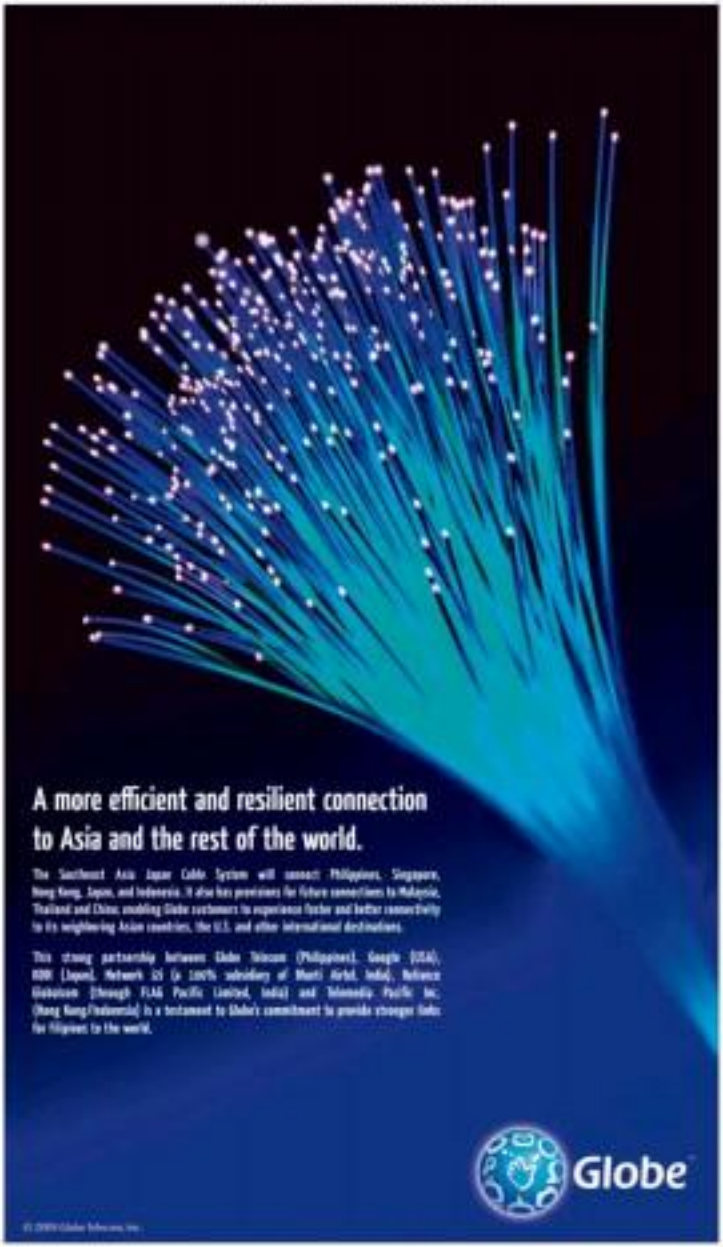
The SJC is a 8-fiber high capacity submarine cable system that will allow open access and flexible capacity on usage. It also has flexibility to terminate individual traffic at identified Points of Presence (PoP) in Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

Initialing parties to this breakthrough project include Globe Telecom (Philippines), Google (USA), KDDI (Japan), Network i2i (a 100% subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, India), Reliance Globalcom (through FLAG Pacific Limited, India) and Telemedia Pacific Inc., Ltd. (Hong Kong/Indonesia). Other initialed parties have signified their intent to participate in the project once requisite approvals have been obtained.

The initialing parties signed the agreements in Manila on December 10, 2009. The SJC is targeted to be operational by the second quarter of 2013.

By investing in another submarine cable system, Globe brings increased cable diversity to its network for continuous and superior internet connectivity and voice services. This will also enable Globe to bring more advanced solutions to Philippine customers.

Mr. Francois Olivin (Google), Mr. Ernest Cu (Globe), Mr. Anji Ito (KDDI), Mr. A.M. Rai (Network i2i, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bharti Airtel), Mr. Hank Hankela (Telemedia Pacific, Inc.), Mr. Gil Genio (Globe)



Aplus METRO
Gino Abelardo S. Ulanday

Detained military officers figure in scuffle

Spat between Querubin's wife, Army major leads to shoving match

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A REMEDIALLED MARINE COLONEL AND AN Army officer detained in connection with the Marine standoff in 2006 were set to file criminal charges against each other after they figured in a scuffle inside a detention facility at Camp Aguinaldo on Saturday afternoon.

Both Marine Col. Ariel Querubin and Maj. Jason Aquino sustained minor injuries following the fight triggered, allegedly by a spat between the latter and Querubin's wife, Peng.

Peng said they would file charges of grave slander, intriguing against honor and physical injuries against Aquino.

Physical injuries

On the other hand, Trixie Angeles, Aquino's lawyer, said they would sue Querubin for physical injuries.

In a radio interview, Angeles said the scuffle took place while Aquino was escorting her and another lawyer, Frank Chavez, out of the Intelligence Division of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) controlled center after they visited him the other day.

All of a sudden, she said Peng waved shouting at Aquino while Querubin pushed him against a wall, leading to a scuffle.

Unprovoked attack

Angeles described what took place as an "unprovoked attack" on her client who was being accused of spreading rumors about the Querubins.

"There are allegations about the Querubins that have been going around. They thought that Major Aquino was telling Attorney Chavez about it," Angeles told the Inquirer in a text message yesterday.

But she did not elaborate on the matter.

Peng, meanwhile, said in a phone interview that she confronted Aquino and Chavez after hearing the former "falsely imputing malicious crimes" against her and her husband.

She added that she called her husband for help when Aquino began insulting her.

In a statement, Querubin said, "I love my wife very much. She has been with me through all my sufferings and intrigues and I will not allow anyone to unjustly insult, harass and disrespect her."

Peng said the "bulling out" between the two officers began when former President Chief of Staff Michael Defensor visited the detention facility and shared some drinks with some of the detainees who have since been at odds with Querubin.

The two soldiers have been detained for three years for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the Arroyo administration in February 2006.

Caloocan policeman killed by colleague

By DJ Yap

A QUEZON CITY POLICE OFFICER gunned down a fellow lineman and injured a security guard in Caloocan City yesterday morning.

PO2 Rex Asunano, 31, of the Caloocan City Police Tactical Operations Center, died instantly after he was shot at least seven times by PO2 Stephen Hernandez during a commotion on MacArthur Highway.

Asunano's companion, John Schmidt, a security guard, was wounded and rushed to MCU Hospital. Hernandez reportedly also sustained a gunshot wound in the thigh, the police said.

Based on a report by PO2 Pepin Vivo, Asunano and Schmidt were riding a motorcycle on their way home when they chanced upon a commotion near a mosque.

The two men saw Hernandez "wrestling forcibly" or raising a machete in the area, prompting Asunano to park his vehicle and to try to pacify the policeman.

Asunano introduced himself as a police officer but Hernandez suddenly fired at him several times, the report said.

Schmidt was also wounded in the fight.

Hernandez sustained a wound in the thigh but it was not immediately clear who had shot him. He fled the scene afterward.

The police later learned he was taken to Quezon City General Hospital for treatment.

But a desk officer in the Caloocan police station said he transferred to Quirino Memorial Medical Center against doctors' orders upon learning that the Caloocan City police were already investigating his case.

'SLIPPER-Y' TREE
Old rubber slippers rescued from the trash are used to decorate a Christmas tree on the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City. (Jay Ayala)

Foundation shares joys of holidays with street kids

By Tina G. Santos

A GROUP OF NUNS MADE sure over the weekend that the spirit of Christmas this year would be felt by poor children who were also victims of abuse, neglect and the worst by-products.

On Saturday, the Salesian sisters of Don Bosco who run the Louie Vicente Foundation held its 13th "Pan's Inn," a tradition of Christmas party for some 1,000 urban poor and street children being served at the foundation's centers.

The Louie Vicente Foundation was established in 1999 in response to the needs of children struggling to survive the dangers posed by a life out in the streets.

According to Sr. Maria Teresita Sta. Ana, the foundation's executive director, their wards include children who were sexually abused, laborers and victims of trafficking.

The foundation was named after Laura Vicuña of Chile who was born in 1891. She ran away from home to escape from her abusive stepfather. From a life in the streets, she joined the Salesian sisters, serving street children until her death in 1904.

"The story of Louie, being a former street child, tells the message that street children can change the course of their lives, that they can choose not to be victims and we help and teach them that if they want to change their lives, they can," Sta. Ana said.

She added that this year, they decided to include in the Christmas celebration some 500 children who belong to foundations in different parts of Metro Manila and nearby provinces which were greatly affected by Tropical Storm "Ondoy."

The annual party, she said, was a reaffirmation of their commitment to spread good tidings to the poor, whether in good or bad times.

"It is not just a party but "pagsasama" or sharing of blessings with the poor. We are experiencing so many problems in our country, but we can't deprive the kids of the joy of the season. Because what the condition is our country is, the real essence of Christmas is Christ and Christmas continues for the poor," said Sta. Ana.

Sr. Sarah Gonzaga, the foundation's president, added that they chose the "Budoy Walang sa Bag-ong Christmas" as a glimpse of hope for the theme of the entire's Christmas party.

"For us it means that God is working over us and wanting us that there is hope, especially for the kids affected by the situation ... that in the darkness there is a light," Garcia said.

"It also reminds us that it is still possible for us to share, that no one is too poor to share. And it is that giving becomes more meaningful when your pocket hurts, when you open up to things that you need so others may benefit from it?" she added.

During the gathering held at the Don Bosco School in Sta. Mesa Manila, the children had a blast as they were treated to good food and drinks prepared by the nuns and the foundation's generous donors and an afternoon of fun-filled activities that included games, song and dance numbers that proceeded after a Mass.

They were given the chance to read and enjoy the books at the mobile library, which the nuns regularly take to different depressed communities.

At the end of the day, each of the kids went home with a pail full of goodies which they used their families can share, particularly for Noche Buena.

"This event is not just about a celebration. We want it to make the kids look at life with renewed hope. We don't want them to become so absorbed on the thought of just receiving something, but rather on the thought of receiving that more people love them," she added.

STREET children and victims of recent typhoons receive gifts during the Louie Vicente Foundation's annual Christmas party. —NOEL TORRES

Citizen's call

DAILY DISSENT

Buses causing noise pollution

ARE BUSES allowed to park for more than 15 minutes and have their horns as their idea?

Paddy, 41, Mandaluyong

Daily traffic woes

NOT ON the every day traffic on E. M. Narra...beginning are thinking part of that revenue and those bound for Bonifacio drive down through the traffic night is going. Traffic enforcers ignore the jeepneys and even chat with barkers.

Guillermo Dayanghirang Jr., 57, Pasay, Boston City

Overpass for vendors, not pedestrians

THERE are no sidewalks at Don Antonio Commonwealth and the overpass has become stall spaces for illegal vendors. Please make another sidewalk and a real overpass or footbridge.

Pat, 53, Boston City

Electrical hazard

STREAMERS of local candidates are hogging down the electrical wires found at the entrance of Don Antonio Commonwealth. Besides, wires are okay, to be electrical and is another thing.

Aaron, 27, Boston City

Add-on hospital fee

HOW AS it being pre. passengers are doing ang admit ay magbayad ng parking sa hospital? Kaka-confine ko lang nung bayad pa. Ang taas na nga ng hospital bill, dagdag pa ang parking fee (I just want to ask, does a hospital pa... hasn't need to pay for parking? the hospital has already shop on top of the parking fee).

Ash, 41, Taguig City

Driving in the dark

INCREASE road in the papers a dim by the Land Transportation Office against the use of fog lights by motorists. What about motorists not turning on their headlights at night? Tires is a more dangerous practice than having your fog lights on. Those guilty of doing this are jeepney drivers. Do something please.

Gene Sy, 40, Quezon City

Police: Slain car thief was ex-barangay official

A DMV thief who was shot dead by the owner of a vehicle he and his co-thief had just stolen was a former barangay councilor in Bulacan province, Senior Insp. Rodelio Marcelo, chief of the Anti-Carnapping Unit of the Quezon City Police District yesterday said Redentor Fajardo, 39, was a three-term barangay kagawad in Meycauayan, Bulacan. Fajardo's wife told the police that her husband and their homes after he was let down counselor but lost in 2007. "He probably joined a group engaged in car theft activities in Bulacan since he has no other work and sources of income other than being a barangay official," Marcelo said. He added that Fajardo, who was shot dead on Dec. 7 as he was driving away with a stolen vehicle, had been involved in at least 10 car jacking incidents in Quezon City this year.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Cops kill man armed with shotgun

A 27-YEAR-OLD man was killed by Parañaque policemen who were responding to an alleged fight that broke out between two gangs yesterday morning. SPO1 Reynaldo Anajado said Celso de los Santos, a concerned citizen-watcher and resident of Masagay Street, Barangay San Martin de Porres, was about to leave his house at around 7:30 a.m. when one of the Police Community Precinct 3 around 2 a.m. Initial investigation showed that two groups were engaged in a scuffle when the police arrived on the scene. Armed with an improvised shotgun (sumpak), De los Santos reportedly shot at the officers who were forced to return fire. He was rushed to Parañaque Doctors Hospital but was declared dead on arrival for multiple gunshot wounds. Anajado said the incident would be investigated further to identify the other men involved in the gang war.

Jillianne M. Lopez

Internet shop customers robbed

ROBBERS held up two Internet shop customers of close to P100,000 and 15 electronic gadgets on Saturday afternoon in Manila. The incident prompted the police to swoop a close watch on Internet shops in the area. Senior Insp. Rodelio Marcelo, chief of the Anti-Carnapping Unit of the Quezon City Police District yesterday said Redentor Fajardo, 39, was a three-term barangay kagawad in Meycauayan, Bulacan. Fajardo's wife told the police that they were robbed inside the 3Jstar.com Internet Café at the corner of Ezekiel and Teresa Streets in Ermita at around 1 p.m. on Saturday. They lost a laptop computer worth P90,000, two cell phones worth P1,000 and P500 in cash in two men who entered the shop and at gunpoint, demanded their valuables. The robbers then fled on two motorcycles without wearing helmets. The police said they were conducting follow-up operations for the arrest of the robbers and the possible recovery of the stolen items.

Jeannette I. Andrade

DID YOU KNOW

TAGUIG is bounded by Pasay on the north, Taytay to the east, Muntinlupa to the south, and Parañaque, Makati and Pasay on the West. Taguig was dumanera highly urbanized city on Dec. 8, 2004.

Cyril L. Bonalanta, Inquirer Research

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
Roxas Boulevard corner Pedro Gil and Quirino Ts. Sr. Street
Manila 1004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP AND LEASE THE PROPERTY OF THE PHILIPPINE CONSULATE IN FUJIMI PROPERTY, TOKYO, JAPAN

The Government of the Philippines (GOP), through the Bids and Awards Committee for the Philippine Government Properties in Japan (BAC-Japan), invites technically and financially competent proponents to bid this negotiation, for the right to lease and develop Fujimi Property of the GOP in Tokyo, Japan.

Interested proponents may commence the Terms of Reference (TOR) containing the technical, legal and financial qualifications for the right to develop and lease the Fujimi Property from this BAC-Japan at a non-refundable fee of Php 10,000.00, payable by cash to the Department of Finance cashier upon issuance of a duly-signed receipt on 11 December 2009 until 18 December 2009, from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. The TOR shall contain terms of all documents required of bidders/applicants for the negotiations as well as detailed information about Fujimi Property.

Any interested party that submitted its Pre-Qualification Documents during the last December 2008 Pre-Qualification Opening of Proposals and that is non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) upon the presentation of their original receipt amounting to (USD1,000.00).

Interested parties are required to call a Negotiation Conference with the BAC-Japan or its duly authorized representatives, by submitting a written communication to the Undersecretary of the Department of Finance, indicating the purpose of the meeting, the name of the proponent and the time and date of the meeting. The Opening of the Conference is for the Proponents to negotiate with the BAC their Technical Proposals prior to Pre-Qualification. The BAC-Japan shall only entertain interested parties from 14 December 2009 until 18 December 2009 from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. only.

Qualified Proponents shall be required to submit their Proposals on 21 December 2009 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., which shall be the CLOSE date and time. The BAC-Japan reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid Proposals and to annul the Selection Process at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected proponents.

CESILA V. SALES
Undersecretary of Finance &
Chairman BAC-Japan

Republic of the Philippines
Province 1
PROVINCE OF LIBAG DEL NORTE
Office of the Provincial Bids and Awards Committee
Pagsanjan, Isabel Laguna del Norte

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

INVITATION TO BID
FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF 4 UNITS 100 KVA, 3ϕ/1 MARINE, 27 HEAVY DUTY CLOSED AND 28 UNITS METROPOL LIGHTJET PANCHES

1. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHILHEALTH) through the authorized Corporate Operating Budget (COB) for 2009 intends to apply the sum of Two Million Eight Hundred Six Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Three pesos only (PHP 2,806,473.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of 4 units 100 KVA Marine, 3ϕ/1 Heavy Duty Canopied, and 28 units Metropol Lancaster Fixtures. Bids received in excess of the above ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The PHIC now invites bids for the Procurement of 4 units 100 KVA Marine, 3ϕ/1 Heavy Duty Canopied, and 28 units Metropol Lancaster Fixtures. Delivery of the Goods is required within thirty (30) calendar days upon issuance and acceptance of the Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed, within three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II. Instructions to Bidders.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PHILHEALTH Bids and Awards Committee for Information Technology Resources Procurement and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders on December 11, 2009 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P2,500.00). It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

6. The PHIC shall receive bids on this end Conference on **December 18, 2009, 11:00 a.m.** at the Bids Conference Room, Room 1602, Philhealth Head Office, 1600 Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City, where shall be seen as all interested parties.

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **January 4, 2010, at 9:00 a.m.** All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms, and in the amount stated in Instruction to Bidders Clause 19.

8. Bid opening shall be on **January 4, 2010, 9:00 a.m.** at the Bids Conference Room, Room 1602, Philhealth Head Office, 1600 Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. Late bids shall not be accepted.

9. The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility and technical requirements and financial proposals in two (2) separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the above-mentioned address.

10. PHILHEALTH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to waive the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

11. For further information, please refer to:

Office of the Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committee for Head Office
Mr. Joseph D. Nograles
Bids and Awards Committee Head Office, 16th Floor
Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02)6310969 local 1728 and 1730 | Facsimile No. 6913-510
Email address: bidsandawards@philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **ATTY. MELINDA C. MERCADO**
OIC, Office of the COO and Chief Operating Officer
Chairperson, BAC-ITR

(ITR – December 14, 2009)

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Chonco

Key events of 2009

JANUARY • 15: A US airways flight carrying 155 people comes down on a river in central New York, but the pilot manages to land it safely with no casualties.

• 18: Israel ends a 22-day offensive in the Gaza Strip, leaving some 1,330 Palestinians dead.

• 20: Barack Obama is inaugurated as president of the United States.

FEBRUARY • 7-11: At least 210 people die in the deadliest wildfires in Australia's history.

• 17: Haiti, believed to have been one of the worst torturers of the Duvalier regime in Cambodia, goes on trial at a UN-backed tribunal.

• 25: The film "Slumdog Millionaire" wins top prizes at the 81st Academy Awards.

• 27: President Barack Obama says all US troops will have left Iraq by the end of August 2010.

MARCH • 4: The International Criminal Court issues its first arrest warrant against a sitting head of state, Omar al-Bashir of Sudan, but he is not detained.

• 12: An Iraqi man who became a hero by throwing his shoes at US President George W. Bush in 2008 gets three years in jail.

• 31: After inconclusive elections, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu becomes Israel's new prime minister.

APRIL • 1: Albania and Croatia join NATO.

• 2: Leaders of the Group of 20 nations hold a summit in London, easing tough action against tax havens.

• 29: "WHO cases do not lend for the world-wide swine flu epidemic.

MAY • 17: Police in Afghanistan say that 135-kg air within killed 126 people, most of them civilians.

For the first time, Indian patrol boats in the Mediterranean rescue a group of asylum seekers in Libya.

• 12: After decades of legal wrangling, the former Nazi death camp guard John Demjanjuk is extradited from the US to face trial in Germany.

• 16: India's ruling Congress Party is reelected, ensuring a second term for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

• 18: Sri Lanka's military declares victory in its decades-old conflict with the Tamil Tigers.

• 19: The speaker of Britain's lower house of parliament resigns over a massive expenses scandal.

JUNE • 1: The once mighty US automobile company General Motors is declared bankrupt, with the federal government taking a major stake in its revival.

Air Air France jet carrying 228 people from Rio de Janeiro to Paris disappears over the Atlantic Ocean, with the loss of all on board.

• 4: In Cairo, US President Barack Obama addresses the world's Muslims, vowing to forge a "new beginning." • 6: Conservative parties make gains in elections to the European Union Parliament, which are marred by a swine flu scare.

• 12: The Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is declared the winner of a presidential election, sparking major unrest and accusations of fraud.

• 19: A record one billion people around the world do not have enough to eat, the UN food agency says.

• 25: The US pop singer Michael Jackson dies unexpectedly at age 50, reportedly from cardiac arrest.

• 28: Honduran President Manuel Zelaya is overthrown in coup.

• 29: Wall Street financier Bernard Madoff is jailed for 150 years for a multi-billion-dollar pyramid scheme.

JULY • 5: UN figures pull out of Iraq's main cities and towns.

• 11: China says that 156 people have been killed in unrest between Han Chinese and Muslim Uighurs in its province of Xinjiang.

• 15: Russian human rights activist Natalya Estemirova is found murdered after being abducted from Chechnya.

• 20: US President Barack Obama expresses regret at having said that a white policeman acted "stupidly" in arresting a black Harvard professor.

AUGUST • 20: Afghans vote to elect a president for only the second time in their history. The incumbent Hamid Karzai is eventually declared the winner, but the polls are marked by massive fraud.

• 8: Libya convicted for the 1988 Lockerbie aircraft bombing is released from jail in Scotland on he is terminally ill.

• 25: US senator Edward Kennedy dies of brain cancer at age 77.

• 28: An Interstate girl who had disappeared at age 11 is found nearly two decades later, after being sequestered by a man who fathered two children by her.

• 30: An election in Japan brings the Democratic Party to power, ending a long period of domination by conservatives.

SEPTEMBER • 1: A NATO bombing kills up to 90 people in Afghanistan, many of them civilians.

• 24-25: Leaders of the Group of 20 nations hold an economic summit in the US city of Pittsburgh.

• 27: German voters give a second mandate to conservative leader Angela Merkel, who forms a coalition with a small conservative party.

• 30: Tsunamis caused by an undersea earthquake kill at least 133 people in the Samoan islands of the Pacific.

• 7.6-magnitude quake off Indonesia's Sumatra island kills more than 1,000 people.

OCTOBER • 2: Rio de Janeiro is chosen to host the 2016 Olympic Games.

• 2: Voting for the second time on the European Union's Lisbon Treaty, national finally approves it.

• 6: The Romanian-born German author Herta Mueller wins the 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature.

• 9: US President Barack Obama is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

• 25: Suicide car bombs kill 155 people in central Baghdad.

• 25: The trial of former Bosnian Serb wartime leader Radovan Karadzic opens before a UN-tribunal in the Netherlands.

• 28: A car bomb kills over 100 people at a market in the Shiite resort city of Peshawar.

NOVEMBER • 7: French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss dies the age of 100.

• 9: US army doctor about to be deployed to Iraq shoots dead 13 people in his military base in Texas.

• 19: European leaders choose Belgian President Herman Van Rompuy as the EU's first president.

• 20: World financial markets tumble as it emerges that a huge company in the Gulf emirate of Dubai cannot pay its debts.

• 29: Voters in Switzerland opt to ban any future building of minarets on mosques throughout the country.

DECEMBER • 1: US President Barack Obama announces the sending of 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, but also says he will begin pulling forces out of the country in July 2011.

• 2: Iceland's Icesave chief Monsieur Stefan Ciemacz is frozen out of his near African country after being shot and injured by an aide.

• 7: The Copenhagen conference on climate change opens with officials from 192 nations in attendance.

• 8: Simultaneous bomb attacks kill at least 127 people in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.

AFP

Blair says Saddam ouster right, even without WMDs

LONDON—BRITAIN WOULD HAVE backed the invasion of Iraq even if it knew that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), former British premier Tony Blair said in comments released Saturday.

Blair, who is to appear before a long-awaited official Iraq war inquiry early next year, said London would have used other ways to justify its support for the 2003 US-led war to oust the Iraqi leader.

"I would still have brought it right to remove him. Obviously yes, would have had to use and deploy different arguments, about the nature of the threat," he told the BBC.

"I can't really think we'd be better with him and his two sons still in charge but it's incredibly difficult," he added, according to comments released before the program was broadcast on Sunday.

Blair said: "It was the nature of him as a threat to the region, of which the development of WMD was obviously one, and he had used it on a prior (United Nations) to and the on this subject, he used chemical weapons on his own people...so this was obviously the thing that was uppermost in my mind."

Blair, who controversially backed then US President George W. Bush in the March 2003 invasion, accepted that families of soldiers who died in Iraq blamed him, but

BLAIR

said they could be proud of their sacrifice.

"You know there are parents who feel very, very deeply angry and resentful and believe that the war was not worth it," he said.

But he added: "It's also important to understand that many of those who are in the Armed Forces...they are very often proud of what their child has done and proud of the cause they fought to, so you've got to be."

The former head of Britain's center-left Liberal Democrats party, Menzies Campbell, said Saturday that parliament would unlikely have backed the war if lawmakers knew there were no WMDs in Iraq.

"No (Blair) would not have obtained the endorsement of the House of Commons on March 18, 2003 if he had been as frank with the House of Commons then as he appears to be willing to be frank with the BBC now," Campbell said.

Campaigners from the Stop Coalition said Blair's comments were "an admission of war crimes", adding: "It is an illegal act of aggression under international law to attack another country for the purposes of regime change."

Blair is expected to appear before the so-called Chilcot inquiry into the Iraq war—which opened last month, after almost all British forces left the country this year—early in 2010, possibly in January.

In the BBC interview, the former premier also stressed the importance of his Christian faith and explained why he did not convert to Catholicism until after he left office in 2007.

"There would have been endless hassle," he said.

"Maybe I should just have done it but, to be blunt, you have got to study going on as prime minister and there are so many issues you are having to deal with, that you really wonder whether it's a great idea to put the whole Catholic versus the established church (Church of England) thing in to it.

"I had enough controversy to deal with."

AFP

Bone drugs taken by women may lower risk of breast cancer

DRUGS ALREADY TAKEN BY MILLIONS OF healthy older women to prevent bone loss and broken hips may also protect them from breast cancer, according to two observational studies that found women taking oral bisphosphonates developed about a third fewer breast cancers than other women.

The findings, presented Thursday at a scientific conference, are from a retrospective analysis of data from the Women's Health Initiative, a federal study, and a separate research effort conducted study of several thousand post-menopausal women.

Neither of the studies was a randomized clinical trial, and several top cancer doctors expressed skepticism about the findings, saying they prove only an association and may reflect the fact that women with bone problems who are most likely to take the medications have a lower breast cancer risk to begin with.

The research generated excitement because, unlike other drugs that are be used prophylactically to prevent breast cancer, oral bisphosphonates are already widely used and do not cause hot flashes.

AFP

Sri Lanka rebel leaders killed during surrender—ex-Army chief

COLOMBO—SRI LANKAN troops shot dead rogues during Tamil Tiger leaders on the orders of the then senior secretary, the former chief of the Army who is now running for president and is remarks published Sunday.

Sarath Fonseka said Gotabhaya Rajapaksa—brother of the current president—instructed soldiers not to take rebel prisoners in the days before the Tamil separatists were defeated in May after decades of bloody ethnic conflict.

"Gotabhaya Rajapaksa spoke with brigadiers (Shavendra) Silva, commander of the Army's 58th division, giving orders not to accommodate any LTTE (Tiger) leaders attempting to surrender and that they must all be killed," Fernando said.

He told the privately run Sunday Leader newspaper that senior Tamil Tigers had used foreign mediators to organize a plan in which they would carry white flags and give themselves up to the Army.

Fonseka led the Army's successful offensive but later fell out with President Mahinda Rajapaksa and the defense secretary.

FONSEKA

He resigned last month, accusing the government of sidelining him, and is now attempting to unseat President Rajapaksa in elections on January 26.

The government has previously denied ordering troops to kill Tamil Tiger political wing leader B. Nadesan, rather jailed B. Pulidevan, a senior Tamil Tiger official and their families. Fonseka made no mention of the leaders' families.

Sri Lankan authorities have resisted international calls for a war crimes investigation amid allegations by the United Nations that more than 7,000 civilians were killed during the first four months of this year alone.

The government's military spokesman, Udaya Nanayakkara declined to comment on Fonseka's remarks.

"This is a statement given by General Fonseka and he will come out with many more," Nanayakkara said. "We will not comment on what he says." The military claimed victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) on May 18 after waging war the leadership of the more powerful movement, which began to armed struggle in 1972.

AFP

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Rizal
City of Mandaluyong
Gallery II, 2nd Flr.
Tel. Nos. 532-2222 / 532-2223

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids/proposals are hereby invited for the [illegible] and other Filipino contractors/suppliers as per Letter of Instruction No. 630 dated [illegible].

Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given above during office hours from [illegible].

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be acquired by interested bidders on the above date and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of [illegible].

Bids must be duly received by the BAC Secretariat at the address above on or before [illegible]. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stipulated in the Bidding Documents.

Bid opening shall be on [illegible] at the above address. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend the activity.

The City Government of Mandaluyong reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For more information, please refer to:

[illegible]
Chairman, BAC

MARAWAG WATER DISTRICT
Marawag, Bulakan

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Marawag Water District (MWD) of Marawag, Bulakan through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites LOCAL accredited suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contract:

Name of Contract	Supply and Delivery of Computerized Billing and Collection (eBCS) Project
Location	Marawag, Bulakan
Brief Description	Supply and delivery of: 1 unit Server, 5 units PC, 5 units Printer
Approved Budget for the Contract	₱1,000,000.00
Delivery Period	30 calendar days

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project/contract within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract. Eligibility shall be determined by the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure of any of the Preliminary Examination/Bids shall be discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All participants desiring to Eligibility Statement and Tendering, Bid Security, Performance Security, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The TWO(2)-ENVELOPE system shall be adopted in the tendering. The First Bid Envelope shall contain the qualification documents. The Second Envelope shall contain the financial offer.

The schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 14, 2009
2. Pre-Bid Conference	January 7, 2010 @ 1:00 p.m.
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	January 7, 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.
4. Opening of Bids and Evaluation	January 7, 2010 @ 2:30 p.m.

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 5,500.00) to the Marawag Water District Cashier. Prospective bidders may secure bidding documents from the BAC through telephone no. (044) 796-1245 and/or email us at mwdbac@gmail.com.

The Marawag Water District reserves its rights/flexibility whatsoever to reject any or all bids, waive any formality therein, or accept any bid which is most advantageous for the Government and the Project. It further reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare any failure of bidding, and may assume the bid which is deemed most advantageous to the MWD.

(Sgd.) HECTOR S. PANGANIBAN
BAC- Chairman

(7th Insertion To Be Paid)

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MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Letty Teddoro S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Track and field bets strike twice A30 / Tañamor joins Gabuco in finals A30

RP athletes bounce back with 4 golds; netters win

By Ray Lanuza

VIENTIANE, LAOS—EGHREE THEOVER Amiel Rivera and swimmers Ernani Cruddity and Ryza Ambojo smashed Southeast Asian Games records Sunday as Team Philippines captured four gold medals at the halfway mark of the 12-nation meet dazzling Javelin hurler Rivera, Villatuz in control for the day's fourth gold for the Filipinos, who piled up a four-victory Saturday to move ahead of Singapore in the nation's all-time record of Filipino-American Cecil Hoard and Trini Lopez.

With 32 golds, the 2007 overall champion Filipinos moved past host Laos for a single victory to take sixth place, respectively, Texas Philippines won 100 holding at the end of the 2007 Games in Thailand.

Rivera erased 63.62 meters on his fifth attempt to shatter her SEA and ASA Games mark of 60.38 he set two years ago.

Living up to his pedigree, Cruddity, a great grandson of 1928 Amsterdam Olympics swimmer Teodoro Cruddity Maliksan, celebrated his 20th birthday by repeating as meet's 50-meters freestyle champion.

The 5-foot-2 Cruddity clocked 22.89 seconds, erasing his personal best of 23.07 set in 2007 and 23.10 set in 2005 in Manila.

After winning the gold in his first two events, Ambojo finally broke through in the 1,500 meters, clocking 15:47.75 to break the 15:43.37 mark of Thai Sirikanchana Sirikanchana in the 2003 Chiang Mai edition.

The 30-year-old Villatuz threw the spear to a distance of 45.65 meters, beating her closest rival by three meters and improving on her record effort two years ago.

The in-good condition, in 1 get a good result for the 26-year-old Rivera, a native of Cagayan, Negros Occidental, who is assured of a spot promotion to sergeant in the Philippine Air Force.

More swim medals were expected as double-gold medalist Miguel Molina swims two strokes in other finals being held as promotions.

The Philippines has a gold silver bronze total on the of 11-10-19 as of 7:00 p.m. (19:00 p.m. Manila).

Powerhouse Thailand finally surged to the top, dislodging Vietnam with a 26-17-17 total. The Vietnamese dropped to second (25-25-17).

Malaysia and Singapore were locked in a fight for the fourth place with 20 golds each while Indonesia was fifth with 15 overall.

"Just fight and don't give up," the athletes were urged by Philippine Sports Commissioner Jolo Henry Jugging in a text message to the RP delegation.

Medalists

Another Malik control a chore to the about-64 kg category and the one +75 Pinoy Cheng and Cindy Dimaandal also needed for second to spearhead sweeping.

Another lifter, Rosanni Bibanal, took the bronze in the below-64 kg class, while also booking third place finishes were triple-jumper Andrea Cabuenas and 4,000m runner Julius Servanez and team sister Ann Mark Rey in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

The Philippines is expected to charge back on the coming days through its boxers, golfers, archers and the tennis aces.

Absentees

Athletes, headed by Zaldi Lavarez and Rolando Chavez of Canada is on the final round to score and still take home rating for the gold Monday and Tuesday.

Light fly Harry Tañamor outclassed a lowly tar from Myanmar to reach the boxing finals. Flyweight Mil Vicente, lightweight boxers Jhon Ambers Chody Gabalo and flyweight Rey Saludar are also in the running for medals as all-time female runners.

The billiards team dotted to on the 8 ball pool singles gold, silver Emely Tillo and bronze double-medal champion Antonio Alcaraz both reached the semifinals round.

Late Saturday night, Mandri and Story ear-

Read 2 STORIES A30

ROSE Villatuz was among the four Filipino athletes to win gold on the first day of competition, scoring a stunning victory in the women's javelin throw. Villatuz's best followed Eghree Theover Amiel Rivera's triumph Sunday.

The Official Energy Drink of the Philippine Team
MILO
SEA GAMES MEDAL TALLY

Gold of the good for charitable Cecil

By Roy Luarca

VIENTIANE, LAOS—BEFORE FLYING HERE on a mission for flag and country Cecil Mamiit answered a call of a more urgent nature. The veteran was raised $6,000 through a tournament for the victims of riotous storms that hit the Philippines months back.

Close to midnight Saturday, Mamiit and fellow Filipino-American Treat Conrad Huey made a mere humble—but still meaningful—contribution to the country's cause.

Mobbed by teammates and officials in the middle of the tennis court of the National Sports Complex amid a rain of boos, hugs and laughter, Mamiit and Huey celebrated with an all-out gold medal victory that catapulted the plodding Philippine medal machine at the 25th Southeast Asian Games here.

It was a victory that took nearly two roller-coaster hours to chalk. And when the end came—the Thais failed to return a baseline shot to the tiebreaker—the gutsy Filipinos emerged on top of a dueling 6-8, 6-3, 7-6 (3) win over Thai twins Sanchai and Sonchat Ratiwatana that topped what was an eight-hour journey toward meeting an RP gold drought.

The deciding doubles match was one of the last events played Saturday.

"I feel a little bit of a stress," Mamiit said jokingly. "We didn't know that Jamsin won the lone gold (Saturday). It's good that we didn't know it."

The gold gave RP tennis reason to rejoice—especially Mamiit, who has been haunted by a previous loss to the Thais.

"We came close to beating them in 2007," said Mamiit, who was paired with Eric Taino in the Thailand Games.

Huey set the tone for the victory, subduing Ekkipon Wachirawongsakorn, 6-1, 1-6, 7-6, in 2 ½ hours.

Mamiit, up against no-nit, headline foe Korbkul Udomchoke, had the chance to build on that but tripped, 6-4, 4-3.

Ranged against the cocky Thais, who were cheered on by hundreds of supporters, the 32-year-old Mamiit and Huey, who modeled on his prime to battle courage, rallied on their lone win and dug deep early on as they faced a 1-2 deficit in the first set.

"Treat pulled me through with his confidence," said Mamiit. "I think that's what got us through."

There was little to celebrate with after the match. The pair arrived at the athletes' village with the arena half-already closed.

"We couldn't find anything to eat," Mamiit said. "All we had were Pringles and cookies."

And a gold, which was enough to tide them through until breakfast the next morning.

FIL-AM aces Treat Conrad Huey (left) and Cecil Mamiit salute the Laotian crowd that hailed them against the Thai pair, in a doubles victory that clinched for the Philippines the men's team gold. RAFY CABAL

SEA Games mission boss: Don't panic

VIENTIANE, LAOS—THERE'S NO NEED TO push the panic button halfway through the 25th SEA Games here.

Though bothered by the Filipinos' miserable output of eight golds after five days of action, the country's chef-de-mission Monic Yanchangco sees a brick gold tsunami in the coming days, especially in the pool, where swimming, billiards, boxing, tennis, weightlifting and judo, all medal-rich events.

Yanchangco said Saturday the country is likely to outpace its record-ever sixth place finish in the 2009 Thailand games despite the tough opposition.

Yanchangco said the victory of Cecil Mamiit and Treat Huey in men's team tennis late Saturday night had a major effect on the Filipinos' morale.

"It (gold) came 11 in the evening, but in a way it's good because we didn't get blanked," said Yanchangco.

"Overall, I think our athletes are doing fine," he said. Roy Luarca

Fight hard, Angping urges bets

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THERE'S NO REASON TO GIVE UP.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping yesterday exhorted the national athletes to keep up the fight after the country found itself in the middle of the standings halfway through the 25th SEA Games in Laos.

"It looks gloomy but never give up, keep on fighting," Angping urged the athletes, who conceded a lone gold from the men's tennis team Saturday night to finish with eight wins so far.

Angping noted that Team Philippines is extremely waiting for an avalanche of golds to crash and rebel, beating and weeks.

Nine golds have been promised to athletes while the 30-member boxing team has lost only to fight so far.

The PSC chief said he would be happy if the RP team brings home 32 gold medals, even though the athletes themselves promised as many as 60 gold during their send-off party.

Angping said the agency is prepared to give out the incentive to the medal winners before Christmas, including the P300,000 bonus for a gold medal.

Tañamor reaches finals

By Rozzh Trinidad

VIENTIANE, LAOS—OLYMPIAN JOHNRY Tañamor stayed with a lively foe from Myanmar, 53-4, to formalize the Philippines' first gold medal clash with arch rival Thailand yesterday at the National University boxing gymnasium here.

Tañamor's conquest of Htet Aung, who could not get going after being peppered by dazzling counterattacks right as the first bell, sent him into the semifinals tonight against Thai Pongpimonc, who cropped his opponent from Timor Leste in Sunday's opening bout.

Tañamor has asked for fight open of Pongpimon, a Thai veteran who has previously been an Filipino pineapple: Bill Vizco and Gemo Isaac, before meeting up to the 60 kg class.

Pinwright Andre Cabuco scored a roaring 7-1 win over Wan Thin of Myanmar on the underlying to make it on the first RP fighter to secure the bronze medal.

Counting the event-par 72 of United States-based Judson Rumrapee, the men's team assembled a day-best 290, for a 627 total, just three shots off the Singaporeans and far away from the host-running Thais.

Buried Alcalde's 79 did not count under the four-to-play three-to-count format in men's play.

"We're back on track for the gold," said Pinsuwan. "We definitely have to thank."

The youthful women's team had better chances, however, with Ilocos's impressive form.

Sheila gained down five birdies in the front nine for a 31 before yielding a shot coming in for a 36 that left her 69 that also boomed her tied for the individual title.

Together with her opening 71, Ilocos was at 140, just two shots behind Thai Supaporn Kerdpetcharin, who tallied her second straight 68 for 138.

"I told Ilocos to just hear their flights/scores," said women's coach Ching Lopez. "They did, and we're going to apply the same strategy tomorrow."

RP athletes bounce ...

From page A13

closed an eight-hour battle of wits against Thailand to pull off a 2-1 victory and earn a gold division for the Filipinos.

Huey and Mamiit followed twin brothers Sanchai and Sonchai Ratiwatana in the dwelling time match, 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (4).

In golf, the women's team surged ahead while the men's team sprang back to life as the Filipinos boosted their medal chances going to the final day.

With Chihiro Ikeda firing a 3-under-par 69 and Dottie Ardina carding a 72, the Nationals posted a day-best 350 and passed the Thais by one shot to take the 3-hole total of 2051 at the newly built Ruvieng-funded layout here.

Mia Picazo's 76 did not count under the three-to-play two-to-count format.

A major swing change worked wonders for Antonio Amito II, who fired a 69 for his first national seven-time champion Hiseth Fernando.

With the even par 72 of United States-based Judson Rumrapee, the men's team amassed a day-best 288, for a 627 aggregate, just three shots off the Singaporeans and four from the leading Thais.

Ikeda also moved in contention for the women's individual race, where she trailed Thai Supaporn Kerdpetcharin by two strokes.

took the Thais by one with a 36-hole total of 285 in women's play as the newly built Kinrara-funded layout here.

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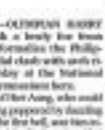
Surging RP golfers back in title hunt

By Roy Luarca

VIENTIANE, LAOS—The women's team surged ahead while the men's squad sprang back to life on Sunday as the Filipino golfers boosted their medal chances at the 25th Southeast Asian Games.



HOLE-IN: Lumayo #9

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Mia Picazo's 76 did not count under the three-to-play two-to-count format.

A major swing change worked wonders for Antonio Amito II, who fired a 69 for his first national seven-time champion Hiseth Fernando.

The 28-year-old veteran got going in the second round with a flawless 66 to 6 under before pulling off the winning effort of 69 to 6 under on his 18th try.

Miped out was the old mark of 68.98 Games set in the 2003 Thailand Games, where the Filipino athletes picked up five golds.

Rosie Villanto improved on her silver medal two years ago by topping the women's javelin throw at 49.49 meters after setting the lead with her initial attempt of 48.38.

"This is good conditions, that's why I did good," said Rosario, a Tanauan, Batgas medalist earlier, who won the event for the fourth time and now stands to be presented to surpass in the Philippine Air Force.

Coupled with the bronze medals of Julius Semana in the men's 5,000 meters and former World Athletics campaigner Jurbert Delgado in the triple jump, the Filipino trackmen showed they're indeed capable of improving on their five-gold contribution two years ago.

Semana, who was second in the event to Thailand, was dead this time to 14:09.83.

Delgado, who finished 12th in 16.12 meters in his sixth and last attempt, but was beaten by Thai Thitikorng (16.31) and S Bongsil (16.34).

Other trackmen who failed to bag medals were Jun Bay Sinto, who was fourth in the men's 400m hurdles (54.69) and Ellaney Sumang, who also ended up fourth in men's shot put (13.36 meters).

Seeding action today for the 20-strong track lists are Bryan Ebuwea in the 200the steeplechase, Nelbert Ouvrate in the 800m and Hermalito Bradshaw in the 5000m.

Taekwondo-jins a revelation this time

By Roy Luarca

VIENTIANE, LAOS—THE TAEKwondo duo and luminaries have given Team Philippines a shot in the arm at the 25th Southeast Asian Games here.

Powered by Olympian Hisashi Ise Go and Mary Antonette Rivera, the jins more than doubled their gold output two years ago in Thailand.

Marvin Fabillon, meanwhile, topped the 58 kg kumite to give the luminkas a gold after getting blanked in Nakhon ratchasima.

Go ruled the featherweight class for the third straight edition of the games.

A highly motivated Rivera exacted revenge on her Thai rival to top the welterweight division, and Mary-rose Adriano Salonga simply showed too much class.

Josie Lagman, Ford dos Ovejas and Camille Sarillo earned the first campaigns on a high note by nearing the gold in women's team poomsae, a new event.

The Filipinas' 9-gold, 4-silver, 4-bronze haul surpassed the last 3-gold, 2-silver, 1-bronze in Thailand although they emerged just third overall.

The Thais wound up champions with a 6-0-4 output, followed by the Vietnamese at 5-4-2.

Ferrera rips Games mark; Villarito javelin queen

By Roy Luarca

VIENTIANE, LAOS—MICHEL FERRERA shattered his national and Southeast Asian Games record in hammer throw to set up a Philippine golden double at the start of the swimmers athletics event at the National Sports Complex here.

The 28-year-old veteran got going in the second round with a throw of 68.3 meters before pulling off the winning effort of 71.52 meters on his fifth try.

Miped out was the old mark of 68.98 Games set in the 2003 Thailand Games, where the Filipino athletes picked up five golds.

Rosie Villanto improved on her silver medal two years ago by topping the women's javelin throw at 49.49 meters after setting the lead with her initial attempt of 48.38.

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ABSAEL: Ferrera makes his record throw in Vientiane's National Stadium. RAFY CABAL

Bata's lament: Too many pool stars clutter RP table

By Rozzh Trinidad

VIENTIANE, LAOS—SIX OVERLOAD UP talents—not the lack of prospective medalists—looms as a hindrance for a Philippine pool team that targets a five-gold medal harvest here.

Three-time world champion Ramil Alonzo and 1998 Asian Games gold medalist Candy Jalle moved into the semifinals with routing wins in the 9-ball men's quarterfinals yesterday morning at the Dong Dok Palace hotel.

The duo could make it a Filipino-Filipino final if Candy beats Indonesian Ricky Yang and Alonzo stops Thai pool ace Dechawat Poomjang in the semifinals that was being played as press time.

World women's 10-ball champion Rubilen Amit, a strong medal hope, opened her bid to the Gold singles yesterday afternoon.

He said the big problem was that all the 10 players here have been required to play.

As a result, Warren Kiamco, who Reyes said does not know much about snooker, ended up in men's snooker while Rodolfo Luat and Roberto Gomez dropped out of snooker pairs.

If Reyes had his way, he would have seen action in either the 9-ball and 10-ball.

"We have no image (that it's terribly overloaded)," Reyes explained with a wry grin.

BATA—Overload

'Don't ask me why': In-form Juvic snubbing RP Open?

PAGUNTALAN

By Mesang B. Castillo

HE'S IN THE SMARTEST FORM OF HIS young pro career and a winner just days before the start of this week's Philippine Open.

But Juvic Pagunsan, the top Filipino in the Asian Order of Merit at No. 15, is skipping the country's national golf championship this year for reasons he won't reveal.

"Please don't ask me why; it's personal," Pagunsan told the Inquirer in Ilocano, just a few hours after winning the season-ending Carabao-Asog leg of the ICTSI-Philippine Golf Tour running away from the field in the afternoon.

"There's still a 50-50 chance that I will play but as of today, I am not a contender," added the former Asian Tour Rookie of the Year, who has been tipped by his peers as the man to beat for the P2.5-million PGP Open.

Angelo Que, who finished in a tie for second in Cantabaog with Henry Sabuatan, three strokes behind Pagunsan, is the other player who's strong enough will take down the 43rd edition of Asia's oldest national championship race off Wednesday at Makiwayan in Ilijan City.

The defending champion Que will return to the site of his two most recent wins, including last year's Mercedes-Benz Asean Tour where he whipped the field with a 20-under total.

This will mark the first time that Makiwayan will host the Open since 2005, when Australian long shot Adam Le Vesconte went on to 12-under victory.

Revered pro Frankie Miñoza has been retired, and it would be interesting to see how the flashiest ace, new NO. members up with some of the up-and-coming young stars.

Also among the list of favorites are Asian-tour Lascuna, Mars Pecay and Antonio Villanueva, who are all regulars on the Asian Tour.

Cabagnot shines as Tigers log 2nd win

By Cedelf P. Tupas

ERVIN A LECTURE ON MENTAL TOUGHness by its coaching staff, Coca-Cola snapped out of an eight-game losing skid by thumping Burger King, 106-94, last night for only its second victory in the KFC-PBA Philippine Cup on the Araneta Coliseum.

The Tigers leaned on point guard Alex Cabagnot, who finished with 16 points while matching a career-low 13 assists in score their first victory in over a month and raise their record to 2-11.

"More than anything else, the burden in the minds of the players was pulling us down," said Coca-Cola coach Ito Penamil, who won his

[illegible]

first game since taking over the Tigers late last month.

"We kept on willing done so keep going. The 11 losses are down, but one more win and we will be back in contention."

Coca-Cola, though, remains in the cellar, half a game behind idle Barako Bull.

In the second game, Jun Magsaysay held off Purefoods' surge in the dying seconds to maintain

[illegible]

son an 87-80 victory.

Sophomore power forward Larry Rodriguez finished with a career-high 21 points on 9-of-11 shooting plus seven with 7 rebounds.

Cabagnot, the second pick in the 2008 draft, took charge in a stirring second quarter attack that allowed the Tigers to erect a 45-26 lead.

Tigers:
Fil-Cans:
HIGH-FLYER FOR—Rodriguez 21, Cabagnot 16, Mocngayat 15, Wesley 14, Santos 12, Salenga 12, Espino 6, Abueva 5, Cruz 2, Gonzales 2.
BURGER KING 106—Cruz 32, Lassiter 15, Reavis 12, Borgue 11, Dionisio 10, Ilaf Yee 8, Mahinay 3, Adrian 3, Ji. Yee 3, Jurbelyan 0.
Quarters: 26-45, 51-80, 87-93, 106-94.
Several Fouls:
LEO HEROES 87—Santos 23, Arnaiz 20, Ilaf Mendoza 14, Cortez 13, Pennis 10, Mahinay 5, Tagaro 3, Singh 3, Wilson 3, Samuel, Pinto 0.
PUREFOODS 80—Raymundo 19, Pingris 12, Lassiter 12, Yap 10, 12, Ildefuso 9, Yap, J. 8, Alfaro 3, Mariscal 2, Wood 2, Custodio 1.
Quarters: 25-12, 43-33, 63-54, 87-80.

Eagles rule Champs League

Ateneo nips FEU in series decider; Jai named MVP

By Cedelf P. Tupas

ATENEO COLLECTED ONE MORE major title in a season replete with achievements.

The Blue Eagles, winners of back-to-back UAAP crowns, captured the Philippine Collegiate Champions League title for the second time in three years by topping the Far Eastern U Tamaraws, 74-71, last night at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig.

Blistering guard Jai Reyes ended his collegiate career with a flourish, finishing with 17 points to win the Most Valuable Player award of the tournament that gathers the best collegiate teams in the country.

The Blue Eagles were caught in a five-minute scoring drought when the 5-foot-7 Reyes knocked in the last of his four triples to end a five-minute scoring drought and tie the game at 71 with two and a half minutes remaining.

Christopher Sumalinog, who saw limited minutes in his first three seasons with the Eagles, scored the go-ahead basket with a layup with 46 seconds left, before Ryan Buenafe iced the victory with two free throws in the last six seconds.

"I told the team that this game will define whether we are just a good team or a great team," said Ateneo coach Norman Black, who also steered the Eagles to their second straight University Games title last October.

"It's been a very long season and I couldn't ask for more from the players."

Eric Salamat, who joined Reyes in the applaud line, unloaded 19 points before leaving the game midway in the fourth period due to cramps.

"The game also turned out to be the last in the collegiate ranks for Ateneo's defensive enforcer Sonny Boral, the MVP of this tournament two years ago, who scored four points and grabbed five rebounds.

"I'm thankful to Sony," said Black of the 6-foot-5 Barako, who skipped the Philippine Patriots' team Basketball League clash with Brunei yesterday to play in Game 3.

The scores

ATENEO 74—Gabriel 19, Reyes 17, Sumalinog 11, Buenafe 8, Lalata 6, Cloud 5, Salamat 4, Salvacion 4, Mendoza 0, Austero 0, Long 0.
FEU 71—Garrigo 21, Garcia 19, Ramos 10, Canaleta 10, Fajardo-see 8, Olivarez 3, Gonzalez 1, Mendoza 0, Orendain 0.
Quarters: 20-15, 45-36, 61-48, 74-71

ATENEO players, team officials and supporters celebrate yet another victory by the Blue Eagles. ALEXIS MEDINA

Southwoods caps Fil-Am triumph with big round

By Frank Cimatu
Inquirer Northern Luzon

ANGELES CITY—WITH THE TITLE ALREADY in the bag, Manila Southwoods still poured it on Saturday and captured the Fil Champ-ionship title of the 54th Fil-Am Invitational golf tournament pulling away at the Camp Aguinaldo country home.

Tournament pro-am gold Gagan Dalay and his team pro Dave Lanoza both carded 36 points, 13-point-old Wiggy Ba had 35 and Junior Flores added 34 as Southwoods assembled a final-day output of 141 and a four-round aggregate of 513.

The Commonwealth team, the virtual champion after three rounds with a 36-point lead over Mission, pedaled in a respectable 144 to tip in 5th with third-placer Camp Aguinaldo on 10-point adrift.

Flores also earned his second individual scoring title.

Mission managed only 117 for the day with Ani Laspiñas scoring 34 points, John Ibasco Gonzales and Rudel Mina grabbing 28 each and King Hebanero counting with 17.

TEE

In the Regular Country Club, Tonie Ilf came up with 64 points and an aggregate of 630 to win the Am Championship Flight. Philippine Navy was second with 621 points and Marlboro Clan was third with 599.

The Classic-Senior Chi Lee scored 484 points for a 59-point victory over BOC, which had 425, in the Fil A Flight. Hon Hin garnered 418-6=coed together.

In the Ladies Flight, Jenny Tee piled 91/35, the New York-based Mihoi Jones won 92 C and Che Lee topped 101.

In Am A, Camp Aguinaldo amassed 306 as up-and-coming Chi Lee team by a point. Regulo Gamorosid ruled Am B, Manila Bay won in Am C and Fil-Am Inside prevailed in Am D.

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TITLE RUN Cebuana Lhuillier team captain Mae Sangil (front left) receives the championship trophy from PVSA commissioner Johnny Perez after Cebuana Lhuillier defeated Petron, 3-2, to win this year's Premier Volleyball League (PVSL) at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Pasig City. Coach and pitcher Randy Dizon and libero teammate Mia's Bao Baoluyan enjoyed the victory for the squad owned by Cebuana Lhuillier CEO and playing team manager Jean-Nino Lhuillier (front, right).

SPORTSWATCH

P2.1-M Makati 6-cock derby gets going today

THE WEDNESDAY THREE-YEAR-old guaranteed will be limited today in the annual P2.1-million "Pamasko Sabungan" 6-cock derby at the Makati Cockpit beginning an impressive cast of top-cockers.

Participants with three wins in the elimination, also slated on Dec. 17, 19 and 21, will advance to the P1,100-day cock-only showdowns to the championship round on Dec. 30, and derby host WTU Sports and Recreation Corp. Chairman Wilfredo Uy will expect the Nielson Sabong Tv 6 Cocks 1-cocker. They are Jun Sevilla, John Capinpin, Jorge Leong, Tony Tolibas and Greg Garcia.

SJC 'Rambulan' fourth day finals gets going

THE PSA-MILLION SJC TOURNAment at Rambulan & Olag Derby, a national multiplying contest that drew a record 2,888 entries, enters its fourth championship day today at the San Juan Coliseum.

Participants with 6 points from the SJC, as well as those from southern and northern Luzon are competing today. Cockers from Iloilo, the Visayas and Mindanao will arrive Thursday, Dec. 17.

Doubters have been defeated into two groups due to the big number of the contest.

A New Breed of CYBER-ATHLETES

Editor Teddyboy S. Molandres
Associate Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa
SPORTS

Celtics crush Bulls

Jazz snap Lakers' 11-game winning run

CHICAGO—THE BOSTON Celtics earned their 18th straight win, beating the struggling Chicago Bulls, 106-88, on Saturday.

Ryan Stevic had 16 points and 14 assists, Rashard Wallace and Eddie House scored 15 apiece, Kevin Garnett added 12 points and 10 rebounds, and Paul Pierce scored 14 even though he sustained a stinger on his right shoulder and his jaw 4 of 12 shots.

Boston scored 16 straight late in the third quarter, ending in a 20-point game and sending the Bulls to their 11th loss in 12 games.

Derrick Rose scored 19 for Chicago, and Luol Deng added 17.

At Salt Lake City, Deron Williams scored eight straight points to start the fourth quarter and finished with 21 points and 13 assists as Utah snapped the Lakers' 11-game winning streak, 102-94.

Utah took advantage as Kobe Bryant struggled with a frustrated Indiana Pacers defense that limited the Los Angeles Lakers star to 7 of 24 shooting. Bryant didn't score in the second half until more than five minutes remained in the game and Utah was up by 15.

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 32 points and Chauncey Billups shook off an awful first half to lead Denver past Phoenix, 105-99.

Billups, whose first half included three turnovers and three fouls, scored 24 points and sank five triples in the second. He turnover with 38 seconds left and the Nuggets leading 103-99 however gave the Suns a shot at a tying win in Denver.

Steve Nash, who scored 20 points, missed a driving layup with seven seconds left and Anthony sealed up with the ball and was fouled with two seconds remaining. Suns coach Mike Dunleavy believed at an official and was ejected.

Anthony sank all four free throws.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki hit a 18-foot jump shot with 1.8 seconds left to overtime to Dallas nipped Charlotte, 96-97, and improved to 11-4 all-time against the Bobcats.

Nowitzki scored 36 points, including 18 in the fourth quarter and overtime. AP

RAJON Rondo grabs a rebound.

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Wise move, psychologists say of Woods' sabbatical

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS IS MAKING A wise move by taking a break from the sport but there major challenges where he returns, sports psychologists said on Saturday.

Woods has announced an "indefinite" break from golf and admitted being untruthful in his wife.

"I think that is a sign that he wants to send a strong message to his family that he is serious about addressing the problems," Casey Cooper, a California-based sports psychologist told Reuters. "It's not to be impossible to do that when you have the travel schedule of a competitive professional athlete."

Helen Beach-based psychologist John E Mourey, who has worked with professional tennis and NFL players, said Woods' hiatus could also be simply a ruse of silencing him to escape the media.

Meanwhile, longtime Woods' confidante Steve Williams denied he had any knowledge of the golfer's "indiscretions."

Williams said he was angry with an American sports writer who said he mentioned Woods' reported affairs and may even have helped arrange it. Reuters, AP

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Hairloss stops, hair grows thicker, healthier. Svenson, the leading scalp and hairloss centre in the Philippines, introduces another breakthrough effective treatment: Revage Laser Hair Recovery.

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Dr. David Mcleod, an expert in non-surgical permanent hair restoration from West LA Medical and Skincare explains, "There are many causes of thinning hair. But the most common type of hairless is male pattern baldness or Androgenetic Alopecia where dihydrotestosterone (DHT) attacks the hair follicles resulting in progressive thinning of hair. This can lead to bald patches and miniaturization or shortening of hairs."

Get the right treatment as soon as you see signs of hairloss. "LLLT used by Revage Laser Hair Recovery is the only technology that has been proven effective to stimulate hair production through biostimulation and neovascularization. Biostimulation is the enhancement of the body to make hair grow more while neovascularization is the formation of new blood vessels to feed the hair and enhance hair follicles to more hair production," Dr. Mcleod says.

Other products or remedies only open up blood vessels to improve blood flow but not to form new ones. Once you stop using them, hair starts to fall or days out in 3-6 months. So you're back to your old problem.

But with Revage Laser Hair Recovery, in just 3 months of treatment, there has been an 87% success rate in stopping hairloss progression. After 6 months, an increase in hair volume could be noticed. In one year depending on the severity of hairloss, there'd be a 30% or more increase in hair volume with absolutely no surgery.

"At Svenson, they have endorsed hair recovery programs that are combined with Revage to get even better, faster results. With their highly trained technologists, you can be assured of good service and well-supervised treatments," Dr. Mcleod adds.

Revage Laser Hair Recovery is exclusively available at Svenson. Call them at 892-HAIR (4247) and book your FREE private consultation.

De La Paz to defend Valley Open crown

BING DELA PAZ AND KOREAN Jeong Hwa Lee will be back to defend their titles in the tough Leopard Association of Valley Golfers (LAVG) Open Junior Gold Championship featuring players 17 years old and below.

Tournament chair Tod Salvador said the Dec. 20 and 21 event at the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo is part of LAVG's fifth year celebration. Amateurs aged 10 to 21 are also invited to join.

Invited as guest for the opening ceremony are Joseph Escudero of the Philippine president Gerry Roxas, ECFM coach Ireneo Imperio, golf columnist Nonoy Ilustrisimo, world champion Cyna Bedrijotes, JAV president William Uy, former JAV president Noel Flores and Valley Golf president Bert Ocra.

Tournament fee is P1,500, which includes two rounds of golf, a practice round, bag tag and caddie, individual photo, dinner and raffle ticket.

Champions will each receive a trophy while champions jacket and free tournament fee for the 2008 edition.

Call Ariel Arcadio or Jonathan Lontoc at 5584910, 0920-5511781 and 0919-4402263 for more details.

From Cure Tips by Burlington

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IN THIS ISSUE

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- BPO firms expanding to malls /B7

Editor Raul G. Manuela ● Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Gov't eyes 8 new geothermal projects

$627.5M in investments to generate 251 MW

By Amy S. Raros

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IS LOOKING TO award service contracts to three private groups for the exploration and development of eight prospective "frontier" geothermal areas.

Documents from the DOE showed that Energy Development Corp., ONGC Renewables Corp. and Petenay Energy Corp. have submitted unsolicited proposals for the so-called frontier areas, which refer to those that have not been explored or for which the government has no resource data.

Seven of the eight contracts are expected to generate a combined 251 megawatts of geothermal energy. Investments to drive projects are expected to reach as much as $627.5 million.

In particular, the DOE is evaluating EDC's applications for five service contracts over prospects located in Mandulog-Iligan Negros Occidental, which is expected to have a resource potential of about 20-30IN; Balingasag, with 20 MW; and Mt. Amplay, with a 30-50IN capacity, both in Misamis Occidental; Lahuyanal in Zamboanga del Sur, 40 MW; and Mt. Dan in North Cotabato.

PNOC-RE has two applications for an 80-MW project in Manolo Fortaleza in the Mt. Province and another 60-MW geothermal power project in Bugtan-Daya in Benguet, Ifugao.

Meanwhile, Petenay Energy lodged one application for a 1-MW power project in San Lucas, Sorsogon in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

Should the companies' proposals pass government evaluations, the contracts to be awarded will be on top of the geothermal service contracts that may be generated in 10 companies under the Philippine Energy Contracting Round for geothermal 2009.

Documents from the DOE also showed that Bilim Geothermal Inc. is seeking the conversion of its current contract into a geothermal renewable energy service contract to enable the company to avail itself of tax incentives.

Bilim Geothermal has a 20-MW power project in Biliran.

The Philippines, with a capacity of 1,987 MW, is the world's second-biggest producer of geothermal energy after the United States. The country's geothermal capacity accounts for about 17 percent of the generation mix, which means that one in every six light bulbs is powered by geothermal energy.

In terms of geothermal reserves, the Philippines has been reported to have sufficient resources to produce more than 1,000 MW of additional electricity from geothermal.

INDICATORS

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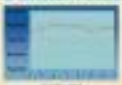

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As of 4 p.m., Dec. 11, 2009

STOCK MARKET

Profit-taking seen

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

AS BLUE-CHIP STOCK PRICES NOW HIT long-expansion levels as opposite to their earning prospects, another session loading week lies ahead as investors are seen using any rally as an excuse to take profits.

Last week, the trade-values the Philippine Stock Exchange dipped below the 3,000 mark but bounced its losses in the last two days. The index closed Friday

See next week's report on Page B4

Simple answers to business hassles.

Business Maybank CASH MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Maguindanao outcome

IT WOULD BE NO SURPRISE that the province that has hogged the limelight for the brutal and gruesome massacre of 57 innocent civilians exactly three weeks ago is also among the three worst-off provinces in the country in terms of human development. Maguindanao ranked 75th among 77 provinces outside of Metro Manila in the latest Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of Philippine provinces, ahead only of Tawi-tawi and Sulu (worst-off).

The HDI, developed by the United Nations Development Programme in 1990, measures achievement in three basic dimensions of human well-being: longevity, or a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy; knowledge, as measured by education indicators; and standard of living, as measured by average real income.

Worsening trend

It is bad enough that Maguindanao is near the bottom when it comes to the human development condition of its people. Its HDI is comparable to that of African countries Liberia and Swaziland. News reports in the aftermath of the Maguindanao massacre highlighted the capacity for committing the unthinkable against unarmed civilians of the province's political leaders. Statistics show that the province is among those having the most equitable income distribution in the country. That is, except for the desperados and perhaps a few others, the province's citizens are equitably poor. Says the 2009 Philippine Human Development Report, half (output in shock: "Indeed, widespread poverty may be a great equalizer."

More remarkable is the fact that the province had consistently improved faster in the HDI ranking since 1997, when it ranked 75th, through 2003 when it ranked 73rd, and on to its current 75th place ranking. It would appear that the province had been spanked (by of its resources through the years—and moral events) got no its death as to by others. Even more remarkable is the arrogance and dumbfoundedness by which such ignominious plunder had apparently been undertaken.

A matter of budget

In a study I undertook for the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) three years ago, my associates and I observed that the provincial government of Maguindanao had allotted a miniscule 2.7 percent of its total expenditures to human welfare and social development (HWSD) in 2000-2004. The bulk had gone to "general services" (translation: balance of payments—my very words probably included), which accounted for more than half (55 percent) of provincial expenditures.

In contrast, almost a third of the spending by the province of Basilan had been devoted to HWSD, and had increased over time. It was clearly no coincidence that Basilan has topped the provinces in HDI ranking. Even nearby Lanao del Sur, but trails HWSD its second highest expenditure item, averaging 15.7 percent through 2001-2004. Not surprisingly, the province's HDI ranking, at number 23, has been much higher than Maguindanao's.

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

Self-reliance gaps

Yet the same analysis for Unicef, we found that the leading provinces in HDI (e.g., Basilan) and Bulacan) were the ones better able to mobilize and generate local resources, much more than laggards. That is, the more successful provinces are those who are not left unconcerned by the external (Internal Allotment (IRA) from the national government, with the IRA making up much lower shares of total incomes.

On the other hand, most of the lagging provinces barely raised any local resources. Their total, which ranks second to the worst in HDI, had no recorded local revenues, having been 100-percent dependent on transfers from the national government (mainly IRA). And yet, Tawi-Tawi is a shining area and a beautiful, good province, indicating presence of substantial potential local revenue sources. Indeed, there is an active Tawi-Tawi Chamber of Commerce, manifesting the presence of organized business which could potentially be taxed.

Historical basis

The other ARMM provinces are in a similar situation, with substantial collections of real property taxes notwithstanding the presence of large landholdings, and of business taxes and registration fees despite the clear presence of organized nonmunicipal activities. That observation appears to be rooted in relatively historical factors. It is not that a national offshoot of the absence of a tax-paying tradition in those areas which had never been successfully colonized by Spain or the Americans. With the exception of some Basilan municipalities, the ARMM provinces are almost entirely dependent on national government revenues for their financial resources. Thus, Sulu raises only 4.3 percent of its income from local revenues, and Maguindanao 6.6 percent. Both are also bottom dwellers in the HDI list.

Positive human development outcomes come at a cost, and no less perilous ones and those the proper amounts of resources are raised to fulfill the needs of their people, then I'm afraid the Maguindanao outcome would be the likely result.

Comments welcome at chabito@inmar.edu

DOE eyes more funds for 'green' projects

By Amy R. Remo

ENERGY SECRETARY Angelo T. Reyes told the foreign companies to invest in key Philippine projects that will mitigate climate change as he participates in the ongoing Copenhagen summit.

Reyes, who is going his own remarks in his how the Philippine government is conditional global warming, said he also expects to "learn from the innovations, dialogues on experiences learned in addressing climate change."

In particular, the energy chief wanted to gain more insights on the "identification and implementation of nationally appropriate programs and activities, and on accessing global financing mechanisms such as clean technology fund and clean development mechanism."

Another reason for Reyes' participation in the Copenhagen climate change summit is to "make multilateral development banks to allocate a higher share of their clean investment funds to the country's programs geared toward a low carbon future."

"[We want] banks and investors to see the Philippines as a preferred area for investment in low-carbon future and more specifically for renewable energy," Reyes added.

[This announcement appears as a matter of record only]

STANDARD INSURANCE CO., INC.
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Standard Insurance Co., Inc., the leader in motorcar and industrial fire insurance in the Philippines, has been accorded a domestic Philippine Peso currency claims paying ability rating of BBB+ (triple B plus). The investment grade rating is a reflection of adequate protection factors, although note is taken of volatility in risk during economic cycles. Standard Insurance has been accorded an international US-dollar denominated issuer credit rating of B+ (single B plus), a notch lower than the Philippines sovereign rating of BB- (double B minus). Both of these ratings were provided by Global Credit Rating Co. (GCR), a highly reputable rating agency operating across four continents and providing ratings for around 1000 organizations including banks, insurance and reinsurance companies and industrial businesses. GCR is partly owned by DEG-KFW, a AAA (triple A) rated banking group of the German Government.

December 2009

P5-B gov't fund to encourage acquisition of weak rural banks

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has approved the establishment of a P5-billion fund aimed at encouraging acquisitions of undercapitalized rural banks.

The fund and the state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. will each contribute P2.5 billion to the fund.

The fund will be the tool to implement the Strengthening Program for Rural Banks (SPRB), under which banks seeking to acquire undercapitalized rural banks may avail themselves of financial assistance from regulators.

Besides the financial assistance, regulatory relief and other forms of incentives for so-called "white knights" are being discussed by the BSP and PDIC.

"[SPRB] intends to promote the merger, consolidation and acquisition between or among eligible examined, good-query owners and eligible rural banks to create a stronger rural banking system that can more effectively serve the countryside," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a statement.

The plan to put up the P5-billion fund came amid the number of failures and closures in the rural banking sector.

In the first quarter alone, 19 rural banks were ordered closed by the BSP and placed under the receivership of PDIC. These were on top of the 12 rural banks owned by the Legacy Group of Cebu delos Angeles.

PDIC president Jose Nograles earlier said that as of the first half of the year, 179 rural banks have already been placed under the central bank's "prompt and corrective action" program, 100 of which were found to be undercapitalized.

Nograles said the number of rural banks in financial distress was actually small, accounting for only 11 percent of the estimated 800 rural banks operating nationwide. However, he said addressing the problems of the few would help save PDIC from spending billions in potential expenses...as the form of reimbursing insured depositors—if these banks indeed fail.

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Meralco increases capex budget to ₱8.3B for 2010

Aims to meet systems loss cap of 8.5%

By Arny R. Ross

POWER DISTRIBUTOR MANILA Electric Co. (Meralco) will increase its capital expenditure budget next year to ₱8.3 billion as it plans to invest heavily on measures that will trim its systems losses to the mandated 8.5 percent.

"Because of the sharp reduction in the systems loss cap to 8.5 percent, we really have to spend quite a lot to improve the technical systems loss," Meralco president Jose U. de Jesus said.

Starting January 2010, the Energy Regulatory Commission will set the systems loss cap for private distribution utilities at 8.5 percent from the current 9.5 percent.

A systems loss cap refers to the limit beyond which a utility is no longer allowed to recover from its customers the cost of electricity that was either lost in transmission through power lines or pilfered. A lower systems loss cap is expected to translate to lower power bills charged to electricity consumers, while distribution utilities are incurring system losses above the current limit of 9.5 percent, the ERC explained.

For 2009, De Jesus said Meralco has estimated its systems losses to be "under 9 percent" and stressed that even so, the distribution utility needed to pour in additional investments to improve system loss performance.

However, he did not disclose how much of the ₱8.3 billion capex would be allocated to reducing systems losses. This year, Meralco had earmarked some ₱7.8 billion for its capex budget.

Meralco's projections on this year's systems losses were better than last year's level of 9.28 percent, which was reported to be the lowest Meralco had achieved in 20 years of operation.

Meanwhile, De Jesus disclosed that the company plans to appeal the ERC ruling on the new systems loss cap.

"We will have to exhaust all options. We will appeal again, but that's all we can do for now," he added.

Last month, the ERC rejected Meralco's request to defer the implementation of a new systems loss cap of 8.5 percent or at least set the cap at 9 percent, citing its difficulty in meeting a lower cap.

It also cited the economic slowdown that allegedly affected its sales to industrial customers and the "expected increase in the propensity to pilfer under the current economic circumstances."

"It is true that the shutting of electricity consumption, however, the industrial customers that are connected to high voltage had no effect on the total systems loss. However, it should be noted that both the existing and the proposed new caps were set regardless of whether or not the franchise area is highly urbanized," ERC Chair Zenaida Cruz-Ducut earlier said.

As for Meralco's concern over the rising insistence of pilferage, Ducut said the commission's recent issuances have "given distribution utilities like Meralco more than sufficient means and incentives to deter or curb the same."

Filinvest Land plans to issue ₱3B in bonds

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE CITIGROUP PROPERTY arm Filinvest Land Inc. plans to raise an additional ₱3 billion from the sale of five-year fixed rate retail bonds in early 2010 to boost its capital spending.

The issuance is targeted within the first quarter of 2010, subject to the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission. This follows the company's recent ₱5-billion bond deal, which was three times oversubscribed.

"Proceeds from the ₱3.bn (sic) issue will be used by FLI to finance additional capital requirements in 2010 and 2011," the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

The bonds will be issued in minimum denominations of ₱50,000 each and in integral multiples of ₱50,000 thereafter. The bonds are intended to be listed in the fixed income exchange of Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEx) to allow trading of the instruments in the secondary market.

Mandated as joint lead managers and underwriters for the bonds are BDO Capital and Investment Corp., BPI Capital Corp. and First Metro Investment Corp.

Profit ...

From page B1

or 5,811.33 or 1.01-percent lower week-on-week.

"The market's medium-term rally appears to be running a conclusion as expectations of a global economic recovery have become more muted. The performances of stocks is closely tied to many theories of an economic recovery, and the fact that a recovery is developing more slowly than was the consensus a few months ago argues for a correction after the markets' strong run up this year," AB Capital Securities said in its weekly report.

But any pullback would likely be limited, the stock brokerage said, noting that the market appeared to have built a strong support level at 2,970. Doris C. Dumlao

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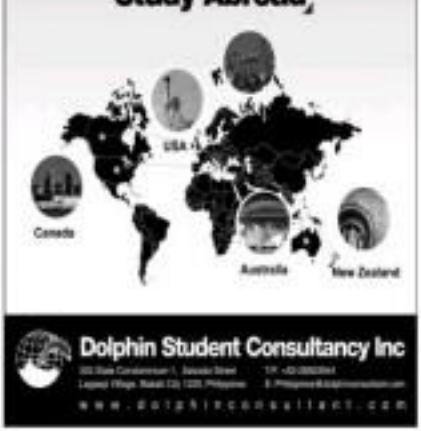

Stronger demand for electronics to boost export growth

By Bernard W. Dumlao

RISING DEMAND FOR consumer electronics is expected to drive export growth starting next year as the global economy recovers, according to an industry official.

In an interview, Ernesto G. Santiago, president of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries of the Philippines Inc. (SEIPI), said the group projected "moderate growth" for the sector in 2010.

Based on SEIPI's briefings with the National Economic and Development Authority, the group had initially projected a 10.3 percent growth in electronics exports next year and 8.4 percent in 2011.

Electronics products, particularly components and devices, remained the country's top dollar earner, accounting for about 60 percent of merchandise exports.

SEIPI's upbeat outlook bodes well for such exports. The decline in the country's exports has slowed down to a single-digit level in October after nine consecutive months of double-digit contractions and after 13 months of contraction.

"The top driver of growth in 2010 will be the demand for components of[the top] five players or consumers top[grade Users DVD technology]," Santiago said.

He said the improved taste of e-books and mass adoption of netbooks, in lieu of regular laptops, will push expansion next year.

Santiago said other growth drivers would be sound business model systems, liquid crystal display(or flat TVs and wind phones.

He said that while manufacturers in the Philippines were already producing components for these consumer goods, improved demand would bring the industry back to growth.

BSP eases forex policy further

No need for prior approval for investments of up to $30M

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has decided to allow individuals to buy up to $30,000 from banks for investment in foreign currency-denominated instruments without getting prior approval from the regulator.

The decision, made during the BSP's Monetary Board meeting on Thursday, was meant to further liberalize the foreign exchange regime in the country and to make it easier for people to invest in instruments issued offshore.

"The move will allow easier diversification of investments. People will have alternative investment options besides peso-denominated instruments," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters on Friday.

Tetangco said the move was expected to expand the businesses of the trust departments of banks, which would be allowed to provide more services to clients once the related regulations takes effect. This takes effect upon the signature's publication, Tetangco added.

Prior to this move, individuals can not allowed to invest in foreign currency-denominated instruments without prior approval from the BSP. Only banks may do so if they are making the investments on their own and not for their individual clients.

The decision of the Monetary Board to relax foreign exchange rules came amid the strengthening of the peso against the dollar. The local currency last week reached the 45-to-a-dollar territory as inflows of foreign exchange, in the form of remittances, from overseas Filipino workers increased.

Allowing individuals to invest in assets denominated in dollars and other foreign currencies is expected to increase the demand for the greenback and other currencies, thereby helping temper the rise of strengthening of the peso.

A strong peso hurts exporters, as it makes Philippine-made goods more expensive in dollar terms and less competitive.

Strongerearlier said helping boost income of the export sector, which has been reeling from the global economic turmoil, was needed to moderate growth of the economy.

Exports account for nearly 20 percent of the country's gross domestic product. The deceleration growth of the economy in the first year was blamed partly on the downturn in exports.

Families of overseas Filipinos also benefit from a strong peso. A sizable amount of remittances in dollar terms increases in value in peso terms if the local currency strengthens. Higher peso value of remittances helps boost household consumption.

According to central bank officials, the BSP has a policy of allowing a market-determined exchange rate. Nonetheless, it intervenes in the market from time to time to prevent disruptive appreciation or depreciation of the peso.

BSP officials said a volatile exchange rate makes it difficult for exporters and importers to plan their budgets.

Some analysts believe that the BSP had been intervening in the foreign exchange market for past week. They said the peso could have appreciated further without intervention by the central bank.

BSP seen keeping key rates steady until Q3

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas will likely keep its key interest rates steady until the third quarter of next year and later to 50 basis points to 100 basis points, if necessary, to tighten, that is meant to curb price pressures, Bank of the Philippine Islands' fixed management unit said.

In its latest research, SPI's trust and asset management group, headed by senior vice president Mary Ann Sevilla, projected that the inflation-targeting central bank would likely maintain a neutral monetary policy in the first half of 2010 but key interest rates would reversibly rise alongside a likely acceleration in inflation to somewhat prices in between 4.5-5 percent next year from the 3.3-3.5 percent estimated average inflation rate this year.

"Key to our inflation outlook, given the damage to agriculture, is the timely implementation of relief measures, specifically rice-tariffication which will help to ease supply constraints sufficient supply to fill in the demand during the lean season," the research said.

The SPI ARTEC research, however, said the government should handle rice importation efficiently, given its experience in 2008.

The Philippines, being a net oil importer and the largest buyer of rice from the global market, was badly hit by the previous spiraling of food and fuel prices.

In the coming year, the research team set point forecasting between $80 and $90 per barrel, still far from the $147 per barrel seen last year.

The BSP's overnight borrowing rate stands at 6 percent and its overnight lending rate at 8 percent, after a substantial decrease totaling 400 basis points since December 2008 to help counter the impact of a global recession.

The SPI unit projected that the domestic economy would post a better growth rate of 3.9-4.5 percent next year from only 1.0 percent this year.

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Globe banks on WiMax for wider connectivity

By Paola G. Mantaclo

ATALA LED GLOBE TELECOM INC. is banking on the rollout of its next-generation broadband wireless service (WiMax) to bring reliable and affordable internet services to far-flung areas in the country.

Nearly a year after launching the new technology, Globe said WiMax was now available in 160 key municipalities covering 60 cities, mostly in areas considered even by world-class landline phone companies.

"WiMax is now available in most parts of Metro Manila, South Luzon, the whole of Visayas and selected areas in Mindanao," the company said in a recent briefing.

Joy Ramirez, head of broadband product at Globe, said the company's WiMax network had grown to be the largest in fixed-line data. Globe is also the only company with a WiMax network.

The new technology, which the said customers the good high-speed and reliability of fixed digital subscriber line (DSL) connections and the convenience of broadband USB sticks, was deemed as the key to answering the hard-to-reach consumptate in the rest of the world.

WiMax is a wireless broadband access that presents a cost-efficient alternative to deploying fixed-line access such as DSL.

The company said the main target for Globe's new network were rural areas.

Since building the network does not involve the extensive installation of wires in every household, Globe said larger areas could be served in a short period of time.

WiMax also offers the speed and reliability that the popular universal serial bus (USB) broadband sticks offered by local telecommunications firms cannot achieve.

The company said it was this low-cost solution that allows them to offer affordable rates for WiMax use to subscribers.

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PHAC Global Bond Fund	1.1450	1.1512
PHAC Fixed Income Fund	1.1135	1.1109
PHAC Peso Equity Fund	1.1585	1.1567
PHAC Balanced Fund	0.9855	0.9847
Principal Protect 1	0.9805	0.9871
Principal Protect 2	0.9845	0.9874
Principal Protect 3	0.9883	0.9949
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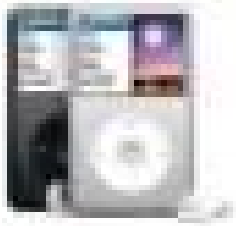

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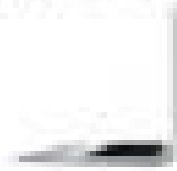

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There may never be a self-portrait as good as this

SAMSUNG ST550

Text and Photos by Eugene Acuzar

WE OFTEN SEE people trying to take pictures of themselves with their cameras held up at arm's length. More turn out to be unsuccessful.

Samsung has come out with a device that gives consumers the ability to easily step out from behind the camera and put themselves in the picture.

The innovative and stylish Samsung ST550 compact digital camera is equipped with its 2.7 LCD screen, a hidden 1.5-inch LCD screen on the front side of the camera unit and a 3.5-inch main touchscreen LCD at the back that features a high resolution display, allowing users to scroll quickly through all the menus for ease of use.

Its 27-124 mm Schneider-Kreuznach image stabilized lens will enable the photographer to have a wider focal length range, making it possible to take pictures at various distances and positions.

I have tried taking pictures with this 12-megapixel compact camera and the results were generally good, every image is clear, vivid and sharp with very minimal noise.

An interesting feature of this camera is the Smart Auto, which freezes the user from the hassle of selecting the type of settings to use. The Smart Auto will analyze key elements of your composition and will automatically select the ideal setting from 16 different scene types, ranging from landscape to portrait.

Another key feature of this camera is face Recognition. The camera will actually remember and prioritize the faces it sees frequently when taking pictures, so you don't have to worry about the camera focusing on strangers in a crowd scene.

The only external buttons are for power, zoom, capture and playback.

Many of the actions, such as image advance and delete, may be done by sliding a finger over the main LCD touchscreen display.

Some features may be accessed by tilting the camera or by tapping.

When the camera is in Child Scene mode, the front LCD plays a cheery animation to make the subject smile. Aside from its ability to take high-quality digital still images, the ST550 also offers an impressive 720P HD video recording at 30 frames per second, using the H.264 format. It allows you to record twice as much the normal MPEG4.

The ST550 also offers dual connectivity (adapters sold separately) so that you can enjoy your HD video, as well as digital still images, on an HDTV or HD monitor.

This camera is well thought out and worthy of anyone who loves to capture memorable moments.

Panasonic's new aircon line promises up to 50% savings

WHEN BUYING AN AIR conditioner these days, one must consider not only the selling price but more importantly, the amount it will add to one's monthly electricity bill.

Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp. aims to address this concern with its latest line of air conditioners called "Eneloop" (environmental innovation) series, which promises up to 50 percent savings in electricity costs.

The big savings, according to Panasonic, are made possible by its inverter technology.

ENVIO air conditioner

Many air-conditioners run on a constant power output whatever time of day, which means high electricity bills. But Panasonic's inverter technology changes the compressor speed, raising or lowering the unit's output power to suit the environment, ensuring a more efficient use of energy.

This technology, according to the company, provides just the right amount of power needed to cool a room. The desired room temperature is achieved 1.5 times faster than with conventional air conditioners, which means less energy is used to reach the set temperature.

"Once the room is cool enough, the inverter technology varies the power output of the compressor for a continuous supply of cool air at the desired temperature," it said, adding that with conventional air-conditioners, the temperature is controlled by on-and-off switching.

"The constant on and off feature results in huge electricity consumption," it says.

Panasonic said the Eneloop air conditioners were fitted with its signature e-ion air purifying system with its new patented ionizer.

This special air purifying technology drowns, captures and electronically deactivates harmful particles inside air, which ensures that one breathes only fresh, quality air, Panasonic said.

Carvin Salcedo-Soriano

Things to put on your wish list for Santa

IN TIME FOR THE YEARS GIFT-GIVING season, Acer goes full blast with its fresh lineup of Aspire notebooks and desktops that boast of the company's most advanced and innovative display capabilities and cutting-edge technology.

All seven products were premiered for the Philippine market recently. The notebook lineup consists of the multi-touch and innovative Aspire 3750PG laptop, the Aspire 5738DG 3D laptop, and the Power One PO2280 notebook.

Under the desktop line, Acer offers the Aspire Predator G7700, Aspire M7721, the desk and smart Aspire M5935 and the all-in-one multi-touch desktop Aspire Z5610.

Acer's latest offerings are all preloaded with Windows 7 Home Premium.

FERRARI One

Exciting notebooks

The Aspire 3750PG holds the distinction of being Acer's first notebook PC with real-touch screen capabilities, making navigation more intuitive and interactive.

Powered by the latest Intel Generation 2 processor, this multi-touch, interactive laptop sells for P79,999.

Your world in 3D. That's what Aspire 5738DG offers as it features the unique 3DDeep 3D solution—complete with a 3D screen, software and glasses to enable vibrant 3D visuals. Aspire 5738DG retails at P59,999.

In celebration of the world's most prestigious racing holidays, Acer presents the Ferrari One PO2280. It has an Intel Core i5 760 processor, a fine ATI Radeon HD 5450 graphics processor, 6 speakers were engineered to ensure the best audio quality—each pair fine-tuned by Dolby Laboratory. The Ferrari One sells for P59,999.

Innovative desktops

Dubbed as the supreme gaming PC, the Aspire Predator G7750 combines the best processor, graphics and memory technologies—a liquid cooled over clockable Intel Core 17 Extreme Edition processor, triple-channel DDR3 memory and choice of 2-way NVIDIA SLI or 2-way ATI CrossFireX graphics. It has a 24-inch LCD monitor with 11 USB ports for all the gaming peripherals. Suggested retail price is P183,980.

Also designed for an exciting gaming experience, the latest edition of Aspire M7721 is powered by Intel Core 17 processor 920. The 23-inch M7721 offers a broad range of digital possibilities, with its latest generation of processors and up to 12GB DDR3 1066/1333 of system memory.

The Aspire M7721 offers second Generation Dolby Home Theater® 2 audio enhancement, high-definition audio with 7.1 channel surround sound support. M7721 sells for P74,999.

Sleek and smart, the Aspire M5935 features intelligent multi-touch software technology made possible by Intel Core i5 processor, to meet the most demanding multimedia and gaming requirements.

It is packed with a 23-inch LCD monitor, a 3Gb super multi optical drive, multi-in-one card reader with optimized third generation Dolby home theater audio enhancements. It sells for P58,900.

The All-in-One Multi-Touch Aspire Z5610 is an elegant and powerful all-in-one computer. Powered by Intel Core 2 Duo E7500, this computer features a 23-inch multi-touch LCD monitor. Boasting Windows 7 on a dual-core Pentium E5300 2.6GHz with 4GB of RAM, a 320GB hard drive and an ATI Mobility Radeon HD4570 512MB video card, it retails for P58,900.

Carvin Salcedo-Soriano

ASPIRE M7721

ASPIRE Z5610

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

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Enterprise Client Security Solution for 500 consuming of Enterprise Client Security Software for 3,000 users and Lotus Management and Deployment Server, with 1-Year Maintenance Service

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) & Brochure Price	Delivery/Completion Period	Date/Time	
		Pre-bid Conference	Deadline/Opening of Proposals
		January 19, 2010 9:30 a.m.	January 29, 2010 2:00 p.m.

BUSINESS Monday

Here comes the Sun Life country exec

By Doris C. Dumlao

RIDA MAYMUNG TAKIM over the helm of Sun Life Financial Philippines (SLFP) at a time when the global financial system is still recovering from a crippling crisis not seen since the days of the Great Depression.

But for the new country chief executive officer, it is an opportunity for her to continue a strong legacy established here by the multinational company in 1895.

"The Philippines and Sun Life of Canada go a long way back, spanning the history of the Republic and two world wars.

"During the war (in the Pacific), all the records were buried. The staff [members] were working by candlelight. So you see why came forward [to collect insurance], we paid even with, our sufficient documentation," Maymung says. "After the war, it's only then that they reconciled the records. And there was no single beneficiary claim. We trained the Filipinos and they returned the trust."

While flourishing wasn't even around at the time of the Second World War, it's the same franchise of trust and commitment that she vows to uphold under her leadership.

Is there an advantage to having a Filipino as CEO of Sun Life in the Philippines?

"It's probably a deeper understanding of culture and history," Maymung says. "But even if you're an expat, a good person will learn of that, too. The advantage is you in the beginning. Over time, it becomes equal."

Maymung graduated with a degree in Electrical Engineering at UP Diliman (cum laude) in 1982. Later, she obtained her MS in Computer Science at the State University of New York. She was a computer programmer when she joined Sun Life in 1985.

"Sun Life is a very good company to work for, and if you talk to people in the company, you really feel their pride," Maymung says, noting that the institution has made customer service in the Philippines the benchmark for other operations across the region. Over time, she has taken on increasingly senior roles, most recently as chief operations officer with Sun Life Financial Asia.

"I'm not a micromanager," Maymung says, when asked about her management style. "I'm more of that kind who will set long term goals and direction, make sure you agree on it and let people do their jobs. I also make sure that when they need help, I'm there to support them."

Simply put, a leader must hire the right people and let them do their job, she says.

Crown jewel

The Philippines is actually one of the crown jewels of Sun Life in Asia, due to its profitable operations, sterling brand and well-run organization. It delivers one of the highest returns on equity given to good client base, although newer markets like China, India and Indonesia are showing faster growth prospects.

Sun Life is the second largest insurance provider in the Philippines in assets to date.

Maymung plans to expand SLFP's agency force in order to increase market share in its core businesses—protection (insurance) and wealth management (mutual fund). She also wants to improve the distribution network through potential tie-ups with banks, opposite the skills of its agents and help promote financial literacy among the populace.

SLFP is estimated to have a share of about 17 percent in the Philippine life insurance market and around 20 to 25 percent of the mutual funds market.

The recent global financial turmoil has of course altered the local financial landscape.

"We've seen a shift this year to more traditional products," Maymung says, noting that traditional insurance now accounts for about half of insurance sales this year, unlike before when variable unit-linked (VUL) insurance used to dominate the market.

VUL insurance is a hybrid between life insurance and mutual funds. A life insurance product becomes "variable" when the policy value at any time varies according to the value of the underlying investment funds at that time.

"But I don't think it's a permanent shift," Maymung says. "We're seeing an uptick now, with more clients buying mutual funds and VUL products again. I think VUL is here to stay, but it goes through the normal cycle. Clients now tend to look at more guarantees."

Maymung says that this is because Filipinos "are really risk-takers."

"They were guaranteed investments, so after the crisis, the demand for guarantees has increased further even among the higher-end segment," she explains.

SLFP's January to September insurance sales were still down by 7 percent to P370.8 million compared to a year ago, but signs of sales bottoming out have been seen in the second quarter.

For the third quarter alone, Sun Life's sales of traditional insurance policies grew by 46 percent to P147.7 million compared to the previous quarter, while VUL sales increased by an even faster 86 percent to P252.1 million compared to the previous quarter.

Quarter-on-quarter net sales of mutual funds likewise grew by 122 percent to P198.18 million.

Sales of insurance as well as other financial products have fallen the previous quarters partly due to the global downturn as well as spillover fears caused by problems in the peso bond sector.

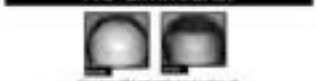
As for the company's third and smallest business unit, pension, Sun Life has vowed to meet its obligations to about 90,000 clients.

"We entered the market late, so we don't have the traditional plans that promise to cover whatever rate of education. Ours are all fixed-rate plans so we've ensured that we have sufficient trust funds to meet our requirements. In addition to our usual SEC (Securities Exchange Commission) regular

MORE BIZ 2

NGA Manaving, CEO of Sun Life Financial Philippines.

REAL HAIR, REAL RESULTS. NO GIMMICKS.



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Make your image work for you

MAPping THE FUTURE

Franco G. Del Rosario

REGARDLESS OF WHO YOU are or what you do, the way you present yourself has a major impact on your success. Despite platitudes to the contrary, you are evaluated by the image you project. Competition is fierce so you need to use your image astutely and do what you can to make it work for you.

In politics, "perception is reality". Facts never seem to matter as much as politics. Instead it has become more about image.

Obama created an image for himself. He proved that a candidate with the right marketing strategy could sell the public on just about anything. Obama was elected President — there never selling needs to be a reminder his promise of hope and change.

Disconnect

Imelda Marcos is a "disconnect" between what voters say they believe and how they vote. Opinions held by the majority of the public do not necessarily translate into the election of the candidates holding like views.

Facts matter little in the world of politics to the point that the unpopular votes Obama cuts in the Senate could not compete with the media's perpetuation of the message of hope and change Obama put forth.

Bottom line, perhaps the single most important factor candidates suffer in elections is their inability to successfully convince voters that they share the same image of the voters' wants and needs.

Tiger and his image

Tiger's story is the creation of old-time Hollywood.

He didn't become the first billion-dollar athlete by just being a great golfer. He did it by becoming a great brand, arguably as marketable an athlete as there has ever been; somebody who seemed to embody the new age, complete with an insanely identifiable nickname.

Tiger sold us Buicks, sneakers. He was the perfect philosophic, polished and aristocratic-looking spokesman for television, or starring as us from magazine covers. He was Tiger, and he lived with his Swedish model wife and two adorable little kids. He had what appeared to be the perfect life.

All that changed a few weeks ago. Tiger became the subject of jokes when he was "unable to play" as a result of "injuries sustained in a one car accident" at the Clarence Worldly Dwellings, a not inconsequential humiliating his handlers.

The question is, did this incident do irreparable harm to the man? Well, not if you consider the numerous prominent personalities that have recovered from plunging images as popular romantic affair with actor Ms Vilma Santos, and prior to that, photographs with film star Ara Mina—dashing in a nightclub could do little to damage this image as Manny continues to remain popular not only after Ms Santos would settle in as many weight divisions).

In a TV interview, Manny said: "Let us avoid what I call our collective misery. I am appealing to all of you to avoid that. Let us assist as we will all be better." Since then, and as the novelty of the issue wore out, people seem to be done talking about it.

What do Bruce Willis, Sean Connery or Samuel Jackson have in common? They are famous male celebrities role models in today's world. And they are all bald. One name to add to that list is Andre Agassi. A, the fitness ball boy of the 90's—the face (and hair) associated with the "image is forever" ad campaign by Canon Camera.

In Agassi's autobiography "Open" he opens up about losing his hair when he was 17 but he chose to hide it. But is underestimable as Madison Avenue had carved out his image and sponsorships were riding on his talent as well as the look of his blond, highlighted, shoulder-length hairstyle with color coordinated headbands.

Agassi quickly joined the ranks of bald athletes with models such as Michael Jordan. It is fortunate for him that men with bald heads have created images of being head-sexy.

Remember the Lady? If you are really ready to enhance the assets by your life, take advantage of this rare opportunity to attend two seminars on Monday, 21st December at the AIM Conference Center from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The title of the morning session is "Executive Impact"—which addresses the image concerns and needs of business professionals, positioning them to gain a competitive advantage through executive presence.

Effective tips

The afternoon seminar is "55-Incisive Tips on How to Become an Image Consultant"—deals with providing services to executives, teaching them proper business etiquette and corporate communication skills. For information about the seminars, please send e-mail to franco.delrosario@mapmagik.com.

These seminars will show you how to present yourself in the best possible way. Where you look good, you feel good. When you feel good you attract people to you like a magnet. If you want to attract the right type of people to you in business and in your personal life, then this is definitely one area you should invest in.

Image consultant

This is the first time in the Philippines. Mike Harding, a much acclaimed US-based, Certified Image Consultant through the Association of Image Consultants International will be the speaker for both seminars.

Harding was formally trained in image, color style, etiquette, communication and relationship management by several recognized Certified Image Masters of the Association of Image Consultants International. He graduated from the Protocol School of Washington. She is Director of the Sterling Style Academy, an internationally recognized training program that prepares image trainers for businesses in the image, fashion and style industries.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is Managing Consultant of Image mapping consulting. Feedback is mapmagik@yahoo.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit mapmag.ph.)

Smart wins big at Asia Mobile Awards

SMART COMMUNICATIONS, Inc. recently bagged three of 13 awards at the annual Mobile Asia Congress held here in Hong Kong by the GSM Association (GSMA), the global trade group for the mobile industry.

Smart's winning entries were: Smart Money's expanded mobile-based services for banks for online purchases under the New Mobile Money Service category; Smart Islands Activation Program (SAP) under the Mobile Money for the Unbanked Award category; and the ADZ on Phone campaign, in partnership with Unilever, under the Best Mobile Advertising or Marketing category.

100 submissions

These entries were in the field of over 100 submissions from mobile phone operators all over Asia.

"This is unprecedented for the GSMA, that one company has won three awards in one night," said Rob Conway chair and CEO of the GSMA.

"These awards show that the Philippines has an innovative and vibrant telecommunications industry that continues to provide consumers with ground-breaking products and services," said Napoleon L. Nazareno, president and CEO of Smart."

"We at Smart are very appreciative of the GSMA's recognition of our efforts to develop mobile solutions that address the needs of Filipinos. I also commend our partners in the Philippine mobile industry for their dedication to excellence and innovation in the delivery of mobile services to our customers," he added.

Help for islands

The Smart Islands Activation Program provides resources, underserved island communities with mobile money transfer services.

This was piloted in Pollilio Island. Quezon province which was not off their financial services when the only rural bank on the island and the telephone number were closed shop in 2008. Working with the Kinabuchs Multi-Purpose Cooperative (MPC), Smart enabled island residents to send and receive cash, buy airtime and pay for goods and services using mobile phones. This service will be replicated in 40 other small islands in different parts of the country through Smart's partnership with beneficiaries, the Bindanao Microfinance Council and other MFIs.

Online purchases

Smart Money's new Internet payments security feature allows Smart subscribers to make online purchases even more secure with the help of their mobile phones. Purchases from Smart.com.ph or Smart email partners using Smart Money accounts are authorized outside the Internet environment via a Smart mobile phone. The new security feature unlocks the Smart Money account giving the user peace of mind and then automatically locks it after the transaction. This effectively prevents online fraud and other potential threats.

The ADZ on Phone campaign combined SMS, mobile content, and web components. Smart provided a special mobile number: 9998. 8933333 as a hotline, enabling consumers to participate in the promo of Unilever. For those who do not have Internet or who prefer to refill mobile, the promo mechanics included calling the ADZ hotline and answering two qualifying questions.

Callers who answered the questions correctly got a unique promo code sent via SMS, which qualified them for a raffle that gave away 50 iPhones.

The promo was also supported by Unilever's content provider, Megaworld, and its media partner, ABC.

Recycling program

The Smart Post Marketing Plaza Management Initiative Outpacific recycling center also is finalist under The Green Mobile Award category.

The GSMA represents more than 750 GSM mobile operators as well as 200 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies, equipment providers, Internet companies, and media and entertainment organizations, across 219 countries and territories.

Here comes the Sun Life country exec

From page B1-1

arenas, we're set aside additional reserves to make sure that we meet our obligations," she says.

Expanding in RP

SLFP believes there is still a big untapped market in the Philippines.

Even in its core AB market, coverage in the country is estimated at less than 50 percent while penetration in the provinces is to a much dismal 11 percent.

"There's a lot of opportunity (here), but we realize that financial literacy must be improved further," Mantaring says.

Through SLFP's "It's time" campaign, the company is reaching to market education—encouraging people to save for their future by regularly setting aside money for protection and wealth management products.

And it's not just mere lip service for Mantaring. Her own kids have learned from her early on the wisdom of investing their own money and cash gifts from relatives.

Of course, SLFP is also backing up its words of its retail ambitions.

SLFP currently has an agency force of 2,500, which was expand by 1,000 over the next two to three years.

The company aims to recruit more agents from the provinces as well as from the younger age brackets, most of whom tend to gravitate towards business processing jobs.

SLFP would like to let the young ones know that there's a good career waiting for them in financial advisory, she says.

At present, the average age of SLFP's agency force is over 40-years.

Generally, Mantaring says, the company has good agents tend to be already successful in their previous careers.

Some were managers in banks or corporations who qualified to manage sales.

Some started selling on the sides and then discovered being more productive while working on their own time.

Those who come from high corporate positions tend to be good because they understand the products, she notes.

"We have a couple of top agents who used to be (vice presidents) in top corporations, and they said it's more fulfilling for them and more lucrative," she says. "But we also have good agents straight out of school."

> I'm more of that kind [of manager] who will set long term goals and directions, and just let people do their jobs.'

But the people who want a career in retail financial advice must sharpen the skills in time.

That is why SLFP is investing in upgrading the skills of agents.

In fact, the company has developed a specialist program in partnership with the Asian Institute of Management and is grooming for the continuing education of those hired outside to join the program.

And while the agency model is effective in the Philippines, where face-to-face dealing is preferred by retail clients, SLFP is also taking a look at other models of distribution.

It has continued to explore bancassurance, or the selling of insurance products through bank branches.

In terms of geographical distribution, about 70 percent of SLFP's sales is currently coming from Metro Manila.

As such, there is room to expand outside the metropolis, which is why SLFP wants to have more agents in the provinces.

It is also putting up offices even in smaller cities like Iloilo, Cebu, Bacolod, Davao and Cagayan.

"There's really opportunity especially because of the over-seas Filipino worker (OFW) market. When they come home, while they are considered C by income, (some segments), their spending pattern is like B," Mantaring says.

In line with its thrust in order to be a broader market, SLFP has come up with affordable products such as a low-premium insurance plan (another benefit if something happens in the client).

As for the global financial crisis, here we were the worst of it?

"It's hard to say where the bottom is, but I think things are looking good. We're seeing a turnaround. It's better than last year. So we're cautiously optimistic."

Convenient credit cards a bane, boon

From page B1-4

charging items at low prices while actually charging high prices via marketing tactics such as hidden fees and "intentionally complicated (and binder) agreements."

Credit card issuers have resorted to what he knows among consumer groups as "predatory practices."

On the other hand, they say that increasing consumer debt as a cause of deteriorating economic conditions threatens the possibility of a successful economic recovery.

According to a Scorebuddy's Bad-Payment Report issued by SkilldeVeion Group, a research organization, upon-end of holiday purchases by credit card issuers have been a driving force in this individual sectors.

"In the current economic downturn, it is likely that credit card issuers could lend to unprecedented charge-offs on credit card balances, costing the banks billions of dollars," a report.

Aggressive marketing

Linda Sherry, director of National Priorities Project Arizona, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization, argues that it was aggressive marketing by credit card lenders and not consumer demand that led to the current historic levels of credit card debt.

In 2007 alone, credit card issuers in the US mailed 5.2 billion credit card solicitations, with households receiving an average of 16 solicitations each.

"Credit card issuers have caused a good deal of economic distress through reckless lending, marketing and collection practices," she says.

Their practices can seriously destabilize family finances, and push families to bankruptcy," she says. "On the other hand, companies will face greater default, negative publicity and increased regulation."

Tricks and tips

But for those who can't afford not to have a credit card, here's a list of common credit card tricks that you should watch out for, compiled by the consumer advocates at the consumer group Americans for Fairness in Lending:

Hidden fees. Aside from recurring your monthly and annual fees, you may be made to pay a late payment fee, an overlimit fee, a cash advance fee, a balance transfer fee, a foreign exchange fee, a bill payment fee, a Phantom Menace fee and whatever else your credit card issuer can devise. See those credit card statements that require minimum monthly payments? This trick makes people pay fee which results in more cash for your credit card company to invest or even make them chronically inconvenient.

A recent New York Times article says this ploy makes the unaffluent hold on to their cash a little longer, but end up losing out in the end. "Your best bet is to pay off your debts as quickly as possible in order to avoid giving credit card companies more time to exercise their considerable clout," it says.

Tricks that regard your payments as "late." Your interest rate may go up, and so check your billing statement carefully and pay your bill as soon as it arrives.

Changing due dates. This is a ploy that your bill will not be due on the same every month.

Early due dates. You may be required to pay your bills just a few days after you receive them.

Weekend due dates. If your due date falls on a weekend, it won't be processed until Monday and your payment will be considered late.

Morning due time. Your payment may be due at 9 a.m., not 5 p.m., on the due date.

Approved overdraft charges. If a purchase puts you over your credit limit, your credit card issuer may charge you for that even but you with an overlimit fee and maybe even raise your interest rate.

Universal default. If you pay Card A on time but make delayed payments for Card B, your interest rate for Card A may jump.

"Any time for any reason" changes. Most credit-holder agreements include this "any reason" clause. It means your credit card issuer can increase your interest rate on a whim!

Teaser rates. These refer to introductory 0 percent interest rates which can jump to 30 percent with a late payment or if you exceed the limit.

Tricky interest calculations. For some cards, you can pay interest on purchases from previous cycles known as "double cycle" billings. Look for a card that uses the "average daily balance" interest calculation method.

Binding mandatory arbitration. This means that you can resolve any conflict with an arbitrator selected by the lender. Bottom line is: you give up your right to take the credit card issuer to court.

But the wisest advice we can give is: get out of debt and live within your means.

MOVEMENTS

Tan is MAP President for 2010

Evaristo Golden Tan, Managing Partner of the Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Offices (ACCRALAW), is the president of the Management Association of the Philippines for 2010.

Tan is the 61st president of MAP since its inception in 1960.

Tan received his Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts, majoring in Economics, summa cum laude, from the De La Salle University in 1961 with Accelerated Honors Program.

He obtained his Bachelor of Laws from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1965 and was awarded the Second Honors Silver Medal. He graduated with a Master of Laws degree from the Columbia University School of Law in 1970.

Tan has over three decades of experience in the areas of investments, business law, mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures, franchises and franchising, construction law, leases and leasing, banks and banking, and privatization. Other officers of the MAP for 2010 are Peter L. Favila, Finance Group Head of Globe Telecom, as vice president; Justin "Jody" Duarte Vazquez, CEO of PHCD.O Inc., as treasurer; and Mabel "Ging" T. Ilang, Partner of SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co., as secretary.

The other members of the MAP Board of Governors are Elizabeth "Beth" R. Lim, Executive Vice President (EVP) and Head of Sales of Universal Motors Corporation; Evangeline "Ging" S. Navarro, Treasurer of Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.; Fatima "Jun" A. Palafox Jr., Principal Architect – Urban Planner of Palafox Associates; Lydia F. Sarmiento, chair of Corporate Social Responsibility Institute (CSRI); and Mark Wilkinson, president and CEO of HSBC.

MAP is a 49-year old management organization whose 810 members represent a cross-section of CEOs, COOs and other top management practitioners from the largest local and multinational companies operating in the Philippines.

Manulife names new leadership

Manulife Philippines announced the appointment of Ashwin Nambiar as the company's new president and Chief Executive Officer effective December 1, 2009.

He succeeds Carl Steven Bautista who will assume the Country Manager position in Manulife Vietnam.

Nambiar has worked in the Philippines for over eight years as Chief Financial Officer for two major multinational life insurance companies.

Nambiar holds a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) & CPA and a Graduate Diploma in Computing from Monash University in Australia as well as a Diploma of Management from the University of Michigan Business School in the United States.

Pru Life appoints new CEO

Pru Life UK has announced the appointment of its new president and Chief Executive Officer, Peter Grimes, who has signaled a focus on growing the business across the Philippines.

Grimes brings with him more than 25 years in senior management roles across Asia, which has focused on business expansion.

He has announced initiatives which include introducing new products backed by a focus on customer service and branch infrastructure that are necessary to widen Pru Life UK's geographical and market reach.

Grimes is credited with spearheading the partnership distribution efforts at Prudential Corporation Asia in his former role as Regional Partnerships Distribution Director.

Philamlife has new leaders

The Philippine American Life and General Insurance Company (Philamlife) recently announced the appointment of the following executives to key positions in the company:

Jessica Alcazaren joins Philamlife as senior vice president and head of Marketing. She will lead the Company's initiatives on customer value management, target segmentation, customer and market research, corporate advertising and communications, brand equity building, product strategy development and marketing services.

Ferdinand Poblete joins Philamlife as senior vice president and director of Strategic Initiatives Office. An alumnus of the University of the Philippines, he will be in charge of strengthening Philamlife's strategic road mapping and execution and assess the consistent quality and effectiveness of the Company's strategic initiatives.

Michelle Villarroel joins Philamlife's Strategic Planning Office as first vice president and strategic planning director. She will be responsible for strategy-based planning and consultancies in line with the initiatives of the AIA Group.

SAS country manager named

SAS, the leader in business analytics software and services, has appointed Philippine country manager Ronny Hebb as regional director of the Pacific Region.

In this new role, he will lead operations in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Brunei and Guam. Hebb will also lead expansion initiatives in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, French Polynesia, Samoa and Micronesia.

The Pacific and South East Asia Regions are the two new regional hubs SAS recently formed in the Asia Pacific.

SAS also appointed Mario Ventura Sano as the new Country Operations Director for the Philippines. Sano joined SAS in 2003. Previously Commercial Sales and Marketing Director, Sano is now in charge of Philippine operations as well as all line functions.

Learning from social enterprises

By Gina Hechanova-Alampay
Contributor

Passion more than makes up for lack of financial resources

LAST YEAR, THE ATENEO CENTER for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD) partnered with the Ateneo School of Government for a project on Philippine social enterprises.

In this project, two documented interviews studies the journeys of Daniel Kalinga, Rapublikas, Pathways to Higher Education, Ramon Kashi, Yes-ras for Fundraising, CARD MRI, Gawad Kalinga, Multipurpose Cooperative and Rapsay.

Although the stories are aimed to provide inspiration for would-be and current social enterprises, there are lessons that other types of organizations can learn.

Passion as key

Many organizations today are scrambling to motivate employees and are investing a lot of resources to build employee engagement.

In contrast, these eight organizations were built with hunger to succeed has lots of passion.

The key—the belief in a dream and a desire to make a difference.

In a country mired in poverty and other problems, these social enterprises give people a sense of hope that they could make a difference.

How can profit organizations provide that same sense of meaning for their employees? By being socially responsible or articulating their mission in terms of its impact on society, even profit organizations can make their employees feel that they are part of something meaningful.

Sharing both burden and profit

A question that we hear from many corporate leaders today is "how do I get my employees to go over and beyond the call of duty?"

They decry what they perceive as an increasingly transactional work attitude where employees invest only what they are being paid to do.

Ironically, in the eight social enterprises we examined, we found extremely motivated and dedicated people who were willing to work long hours even without pay. Are these just a simply different breed?

Perhaps, these social enterprises are simply more intrinsically motivated.

Or maybe their dedication and willingness to share the burden and be tackled by the knowledge that they would also have a share of the profits. But some of ownership can be encouraged in profit organization through reward schemes such a profit sharing, stock options and good incentive and merit rewards programs.

Creativity and dynamism

What was striking in the stories of these social enterprises was their dynamism and ability to evolve. With no formal education or training, the women of Kamay Kalis rely on their creative instincts in developing new patterns and designs for their bags made of recycled materials.

With P2G, Dr. Alip founded the Center for Agriculture and Rural Development Mutually Reinforcing Institutions (CARD MRI) that evolved to a group of mutually reinforcing institutions with P4.5 billion in assets. CARD's shown their ability to respond to needs of their members.

The Rapublikas story shows how creativity can transform what used the be lowly rags into high fashion. Corporate organizations can find inspiration in the dynamism and creativity of these social entrepreneurs.

Resilience and learning

Hand in hand with risks is the possibility of failure. Another factor that appears to be critical for the success of these social enterprises is their resilience and ability to learn from experience. All of the enterprises we examined experienced failure and difficulty, yet were able to overcome these. Disorientation is a process Ford almost brought CARD to its knees.

But they took the challenge to see things right, learn from their mistakes, and were continue to take risks—a lesson we all can learn in our organizations.

Leadership development

Many businesses revolve around the founder. In these eight organizations, leadership development and empowerment were crucial to ensure sustainability of the organization.

For example, the founders of Kamay Krafts Service for Asia's Urban Poor ensured that the cooperative would eventually be able to stand independently. It took these years to transition the women from a beneficiary to business owner mindset. But today, the cooperative is operating independently and run by community leaders.

Power of social enterprises

Organizations engaged in or contemplating corporate social responsibility initiatives may also want to take a closer look at social enterprises as a viable model.

To get their employees out of the cycle of debt and loan sharks, the owners of Gawi's organized their employees into a cooperative.

The cooperative not only provides financial loans and housing assistance, it also gives training on basic finance such as saving, budgeting and investment to its members.

The cooperative also invested in income-generating projects such as vending machines that augment members' earnings.

These case studies suggest the power of social enterprises—how bringing together business people, development workers, and community leaders can create much more impact than simple dollars can.

Ordinary, extraordinary

Many people believe that it takes a lot of resources and wide connections to become successful as an entrepreneur.

Yet these social enterprises show that the best ideas don't necessarily come from the most educated or powerful.

The founders are people just like you and me—some young, some old, some learned, others not.

They are simply ordinary people who believed that change can happen and committed themselves to be part of the solution.

(The book Pitt the People: With the People: Developing Social Enterprises in the Philippines will be available in major bookstores. For inquiries, contact Ateneo University Press at 4261984, 4266001 ext 4115. For comments or questions about this article contact the author through Ateneo CORD (ginahechanova@ateneo.edu).)

BUSINESS Monday

Save for rainy days ahead, banks urge locals

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—Government and private bankers kicked off last week a road show advocating responsible saving, which addresses the demand for a post-calamity recovery fund after the country was hit by successive typhoons this year.

Maria Leonida Pico-Ochia, vice president for communications of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. (PDIC), said rationalizing the idea of saving money as a life skill helps Filipinos respond better to calamities like the recent landslides and floods triggered by Typhoons "Ondoy" and "Pepeng."

Speaking to banking students of three colleges in the University of Baguio, Albert Lopez, president of the Baguio-Benguet Bankers Club, said depositing their money "is how you help the economy."

He said banks recover deposits or finance loans taken by public or private industries.

Ochia said the deposits represent what ordinary Filipinos contribute to the massive Philippine recovery program initiated by government.

During a Dec. 4 post-disaster road show led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said the banking industry survived the calamities unscathed.

BSP Deputy Director Edmundo de Leon said the money drives vegetable prices up in October and caused inflation to rise, but banks reviving cabanatuy areas had not availed themselves of emergency aid granted by BSP "which suggests [that the typhoons have] insignificant impact on the industry."

The anticipated increase in remittances from overseas Filipinos to restore trust that banks represent in risky brink business, De Leon said.

Donald Zorrilla, president of Makati-based Overseas Bankers Association of the Philippines, said the industry will continue to increase deposits, in light of the impact of last year's global financial crisis on overseas Filipino workers.

Many OFWs were reinvested by foreign firms for by recession and had returned home with little savings because they invested in household appliances or home loss, Pelix said.

Lopez said a savings deposit, at least, provides people enough liquid assets to respond to emergencies.

which designed the road show, said the advocacy was triggered by the closure of and discovery of fraud among 12 rural banks owned by the Legacy Group.

The road show promotes seven guidelines for a wise depositor: "Know your bank, do not confuse savings with investments, choose the bank according to your needs, secure and protect your bank documents, always demand bank identification and bad reinvested about PDIC rules and walk away from bank offer that are too good to be true."

Ochia said the Legacy scandal had not harmed the industry and banks have seen growth in the industry's 30 million deposits.

But she said the industry still needs to increase deposition, in light of the impact of last year's global financial crisis on overseas Filipino workers.

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Convenient credit cards a bane, boon

By Lila Berlongan-Ahaana
Contributor

'TIS THE SEASON TO SPEND, drink and be merry and indulge in pleasure even as the rest of the world ends from an economic downturn and the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Pesobi economists tell us that consumer spending is a major driver of local economies. The idea is really quite simple—if people spend less, demand for goods and services will drop. With less demand, production will decline, and when production slows down, manufacturing schemes will be reduced, people are laid off and the economy shrinks.

Aren't we just too happy to embrace this concept of spending even if it's under the pretext of helping "local" production? And what better way to succumb to self-indulgence and the pressure created by a gift-giving fanfare this Yuletide than by spending money one doesn't have—that is, via one's credit card?

Catch

But don't delude yourself into thinking that a credit card company or issuer looks after your best interests. For one, it has made impulsive buyers and shopaholics out of a number of prudent people.

There's a catch when a credit card department of a bank sends you an unsolicited card when you have been delinquent in your monthly payments or when you have not applied for one.

'Ideology'

If you wish to be unaware about it, credit card issuers espouse an "ideology." If you will, they want their cardholders to be irresponsible. The former don't really want the loans to be repaid—at least not right away—so that it will be raised in debt even further.

And if you so much as default in your payments, expect a battery of abusive and illegal collection techniques—that is, hubbing repeated, frequent and disruptive telephone calls at your home and places of work and falsely threatening you, or using rude or obscene language.

Normally, for instance, a person will was filed nothing to prohibit the delivery of any credit card applications, pre-approved written solicitations or credit cards to people aged 24 and below owing to their "lack of financial experience, which can easily lead to an accumulation of an overwhelming amount of debt."

A senior researcher of the Center for Responsible Lending (a nonprofit research and policy organization working to eliminate abusive financial practices) and a finance expert of Social Funds (the largest personal finance website devoted to socially responsible investing) say that in the United States alone, for the last 20 years, credit card companies have called us a fortune to drive up debt and make it appear that consumers are pro-

CONTINUED B2.2

Chery Leads Chinese Independent Brands' Way to Dakar

On October 21, 2009, "The Press Conference of Chinese Rally Fiesta Challenging 2010 Dakar Rally" was held by Chery Automobile Co. Ltd. in Beijing. Chery announced that Chinese Rally Team, composed of its first large international SUV Rally R3, would campaign the "2010 Dakar Rally". This is the first time for Chinese auto brand to attend Dakar rally, which rewrites the history of zero record for Chinese independent brands in Dakar in the past 30 years.

At the beginning of 2009, Chery changed its 14 year "Chery" single-brand strategy and launched three new brands in domestic market: Rich, Fiely, Kimo, aiming respectively at segments of high-end passenger car, high-end commercial car and compact. Together with Chery, they form a strategic layout of "Great Chery" with multi-brands, multi-marketing channels and multi-product lines. Although devoted both in product and position, the four brands all follow the original principle of "supreme honor, leading product, intensive-oriented cooperation and open culture". Currently, the main purpose of Chery's overseas market is to further enhance the development and marketing network construction. With after-sales service network. Therefore, the multi-brand strategy is only applied in China, while in overseas markets the brand of Chery is used.

As a new brand, Fiely is "original and from Chery, targeting high-end", with "vision, entertaining, control" as its key spirit, and high-end all round commercial vehicle as its main products. Representing Chery Corporation, Fiely Challenging Dakar fully indicates the strength, confidence and vision of this brand and products.

Dakar is considered as one of the most "dead" rally because the terrain of its road legs is much more complicated and difficult than that of common rallies, and the vehicles are all real SUV instead of multi-function cars. Most of the legs are for example highways, drivers have to go through sand dunes, mud grass, rocks and desert, with long race time and bad weather. The 2010 Dakar Rally will be held from January 1 to January 16, with its legs focused in Argentina and Argentina. This time the legs will be much more difficult than before. Although the mileage is forecasted to be basically 8000km, 3000km less than that of 2009, in fact, all legs (only a length as long as 5200km. Meanwhile, the grand legs are reduced and that of massive desert are added. Therefore, it is obviously a cruel and tough challenge for Fiely Best and R3, who is for the first time to attend the rally.

Choosing Dakar to challenge the top and most tough race around the world, Chery hopes to show the strength of its products and brand. The Fiely team challenging Dakar will be constituted by four vehicles—two R3 race cars, one R3 co-driver car and one Fiely H3 support car for managing emergency replacements.

For the first time to attend the Dakar Rally, Fiely has invited several international and domestic experts to manage and operate this team. Mr. Gal Hong Kong, China), who is named "the wheel driver king" and has successfully operated several Rally, will be nominated as the manager, leading the rival to challenge the "most crucial race around the world". The first driver is Lu Yanquan, who is the oldest Dakar race for five times. Currently, the rival is under intense preparation, all the preparations work for the race is proceeding steadily. Lu expressed on an interview that "It is definitely stressful to attend 2010 Dakar Rally, but R3, as a real Chinese brand, has different meaning, we have to get good scores."

Mr. Tongyue, the CEO and General Manager of Chery Group, said in the Press conference, "To attend the Dakar race, which designed the road show, said the advocacy was triggered by the closure of and discovery of fraud among 12 rural banks owned by the Legacy Group.

The road show promotes seven guidelines for a wise depositor: "Know your bank, do not confuse savings with investments, choose the bank according to your needs, secure and protect your bank documents, always demand bank identification and bad reinvested about PDIC rules and walk away from bank offer that are too good to be true."

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Classical Christmas concert pays tribute to UST heritage

PATXI and Sofia Elizalde, Brooke Tuason

THE ANNUAL CLASSICAL CHRISTmas Concert of the University of Santo Tomas on Dec. 3 made a grand toast to the multifaceted heritage of the Pontifical University.

Now on its second year of raising funds for the restoration of the art collection of UST, the concert, attended by some of Manila high-society figures, was held to disembroil UST's forthcoming celebrations as it turns 400 in 2011 as Asia's oldest university.

Meanwhile, UST will start its official countdown to its 400th anniversary in 2011 on Dec. 18 during the traditional Pasbalan at the UST Grandstand. Theme of the event is "400 Years of Unending Grace."

Ictsiad Incorporated is UST Rector Magnifico and former Commission on Higher Education chair Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP.

Countdown to UST's 400th anniversary in 2011 to start on Dec. 18

During the Christmas concert at the UST Santissimo Rosario Parish Church, the auditorium was led by Archbishop Edward Joseph Adams, Papal Nuncio to the Philippines, and Italian Ambassador Roberto Aron Fedele.

Internationally renowned

Leading this year's performers were tenor Abdul Cortez, a former faculty member of the UST Conservatory of Music and now a voice professor at the Vienna Conservatory of Music; the UST Singers; and the UST Symphony Orchestra under Herminigildo Raneses.

Soprano Rachelle Gorodeo, tenor Lemuel de la Cruz and baritone Andrew Fernando al- so performed.

Sounds of a rousing overture and ringing church bells, reminiscent of the traditional midnight Mass, helped set the mood for the event.

Coro Virtuoso, Liturgikoro Vocal Ensemble, UST Singers and Tiples de Santo Domingo under Eugene Tandoc opened the show with a medley of Filipino Christmas songs: "Pasko Na Kaayuan," "Gaudeamus Gaks," "Kudos Huwag," "Sa Pudong Betlehem."

They were accompanied by the UST Symphony Orchestra.

Leonard de la Cruz performed with the Tiples, the country's oldest boys' choir, Franz Schubert's "Ma Cherchiai ta Cote" (A Thou-

CLASSICAL C2

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SINGAPORE Ambassador Jaime Ongpin, Consular Marianne Meyer Lim, Rockefeller and Mr. Isidro Abaño light up UST Christmas tree.

UST music dean and CCP artists director Raul Sunico and conductor Herminigildo Ramos

UST RECTOR Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP, and Tessa Prieto-Valdes

MIKE Toledo, Rachelle Ann Go, Vicky Zubiri

Classical Christmas . . .

from page B1

and Chenko to a Choir).

De La Cruz then teamed up with a number of the choir to sing the traditional song "Good King Wenceslas."

Conservatory of Music senior lecturer Jerhone Medina and senior Vincent Evangelista performed "Ave Maria" from "A Mozart Symphony." More majors Marie Ann Dominese and Christian Joel Anthony Inga rendered "As Long as There's Christmas."

Some 50 artists led by the UST Jazz Ensemble in a jamming session of a Christmas medley.

Abdiel Gamboa made a powerful rendition of George Gkhel's "Agnus Dei."

The UST Singers, under Fidel Calalang, took the spotlight and performed "Alles wie Gehen Sie Lobet dem Herr," "Ave Maria," "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and "Morning Songs."

Andrew Fernando gripped the audience now with his mighty rendition of "What Child Is This?"

He was later joined by De la Cruz and Gonzalez in the moving duetsong "Bosom Peticipem."

Gonzalez, the country's top soprano, as always, shone. With the Lenghlaw Vocal Ensemble and Coro Tomasino, she performed "Alleluia" and "The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy."

For the finale, all the performers sang a Christmas medley and enjoined the audience to sing along with them "Silent Night" and "Sing Pasko ng Buhagsik."

Cocktails were served at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, where guests were treated to the newly restored paintings from the UST collection, such as Juvenicio Valera's portrait of José Rizal, as well as his murals, "Sanctissima Rosario" and "The Crucifixion."

Part of the donations would also be used to fund scholarships in the UST Conservatory, the country's biggest music school.

Marietta Zobel, co-chair of the concert's organizing committee with UST Museum director Fr. Isidro Abaño, OP, said the concert sought to pay tribute to UST as a legacy to the Filipino people.

HENICHU and Raul Concepcion, Ching Henricus.

TOURISM undersecretary Eduardo Jarque, Susan Cale-Medina and Andrew Gan

RICKY Toledo, Tats Manotoc and Chito Vijandre

GIANT Christmas tree

HONORS Lenneil de la Cruz performing with the UST Symphony Orchestra.

HANNIEL Zobel

HAMBUJA Mayor Alfredo Lim, Angelina Cruz and Papal Nuncio Edward Joseph Adams

UST Singers

JACKIE Ejercito-Lopez

"The concert's role is to gather funds [for the restoration of the UST collection]. because I believe the University of Santo Tomas is our heritage, a resource that we need to preserve," Zobel said.

Countdown to 2011

The Dec. 16 fundraiser will officially start the countdown to 2011 and kick off the celebration of the UST Quadricentennial, Fr. De la Rosa said.

Alumni Quintelino, Kim Atienza and JC Cuadrado will emcee the fundraiser.

Among the several grand events to mark the UST quadricentennial are "Lumina Sacris: An Exhibition of Historical Treasures," an international exhibit to feature the collections from UST's Miguel de Benavides Central Library, including "Doctrina Christiana," the first printed book in the Philippines (published by the Dominicans and printed by the original UST press in 1593); Copernicus's book on the heliocentric theory; and incunabulum (books before the invention of printing).

Other events include the unveiling of Ramon Orlina's glass-and-brass sculpture, Tolentino, modelled by Nelo Pascual and Charlene Gonzalez; and the Manila premiere of the Italian-animated musical of the Nativity of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Established in 1611 through the donation of his personal library by Archbishop Miguel de Benavides, OP, the first bishop of Manila, and included in its faculty several artists who would later become National Artists—Nicanor Abelardo and Carlos "Botong" Francisco—as well as other masters: Francisco Mora, Antonio Llamas, Graciano Lorenzo, Domingo Celis, Basilio Cleofas, José Pineda, Cenon Rivera, and Victorio Edades.

Their students included National Artists Ang Kiukok and I. Magsaysay-Ileto.

The exhibit opening was held at the UST's Glass Hall, with opening remarks by HSCM 1961 Lei Park Roa, acting minister for information, communications and the arts, and a message from Philippine ambassador Mirsola Cruz.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor, and she struck the ceremonial gong to formally open the exhibit.

"Three upon a Time: A Century of Story in the Art of the Philippines" features several sections, with the UST Museum's "Santos" included in the "Chronicles of Faith" area.

A large-scale work by the Salingpusa group, "Sentosad Cosmos," includes the image of the papal throne in the UST Museum's Hemandahan collection, carved especially for Pope John Paul II for his 1995 visit to UST and to the Philippines.

The UST Museum was represented by its director, Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, OP. He later paid a visit to Christina Kho, director of the National University of Singapore Centre for the Arts.

Galo Ocampo's Filipinized Nativity is highlight of Singapore exhibit

By Malou Santos-Orbeta
Contributor

THE WORLD'S ATTENTION HAS HAVE been trained upon the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Singapore, but elsewhere in the dynamic island city-state, an event just as historically vital was unfolding.

As part of an integrated thematic festival by the Singapore government's National Heritage Board to mark 40 years of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Singapore, the Singapore Art Museum opened "Three upon a Time: A Century of Story in the Art of the Philippines" on Nov. 13. The exhibit will run until Jan. 31, 2010.

One of the paintings featured in the important exhibit was the "Nativity" a late 1960s oil-on-canvas painting by Galo B. Ocampo from the UST Museum's visual arts collection. The iconic painting, one of a triptych, is on loan to the SAM, and is a newly-won jewel in UST's vast collection.

The exhibition also took reflects Ocampo's well-known efforts at portraying Philippine folk iconography, and subjecting Western concepts and beliefs through distinctly Filipino imagery.

Ocampo was a faculty member of the UST Alliance of Fine Arts founded by National Artist Victorio Edades. The school is the cradle of modern art in the Philippines

"NATIVITY," by Galo Ocampo

PRESIDENT G. Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor at the exhibit opening.

TRUMPET soloist Franklin Parrish with the PPO's conductor Bartlett

PPO plays marvelous Yuletide music

Foreground C4

formidable and handsome trio of works in the baroque and classical styles: light, cordial, brilliant and majestic.

The festive embracers of the Gentili and Haydn works and the majesty of Handel's choruses made the first part an enjoyable aural delight, evoking merriments...a respite, indeed, from our temporal concerns.

Incidentally, the concert also commemorates Handel's 250th death anniversary.

Frederic Pedit, the trumpet soloist, gave justice to the Haydn concerto. His tones were singing, finely crafted and focused, that showed no hint of fearsome whatsoevers. The line was particularly remarkable: luminous, thorough and clean.

Phrasing was excellent. Caressing his playing with formidable show, Pedit carried through long lines and punctuated them with flair.

In the cadenza of the first movement, he showed more musical prowess, never losing one more momentum, but simply conveying pure musical verve.

Enthralling

Together with the orchestra, Haydn's concerto enthralled the audience. Pedit and conductor Eugene Bartlett forged a formidable tandem; the ensemble was tight, and the musicians' rose superb support.

Bartlett wielded the baton with passion. Well articulated, he defined his gestures quite tangibly at times punctuated with a fist thump. Very much at ease with the orchestra, he conducted with singular authority.

In Gentili's work, the strings together with the harpsichord did a fine rendition. It fished out a well-nuanced contrast of the movements with keen attention to dynamic markings to each striking contrast.

It is hard to conceive Christmas without choral singing. Carols are best appreciated when intoned by choirs.

The rendition of familiar choruses from Handel's well-loved concerto "Messiah" was well received. Featured choirs were the Ateneo de Manila University Chorale and the Ateneo Female Chorale.

Vocally, the composite choir, with Lester Delgado as director, was meager, but its effort was remarkable.

Composite choir

There was a time at the CCP when huge composite choirs, whose choristers number 300 or more, would sing choruses. Perhaps the new management of the CCP could consider reviving this, especially every Christmas.

Needless to say, volume, projection and carrying long Handelian passages were worrying. The high notes, especially from the tenor section, did not have brilliance as they were strained falsetto, hence giving off a shrill sound. Breaking the long phrases was palpably felt, continuity was wanting.

Balance unfortunately missed the cadenza to come up with good balance. The effect was admirable!

Through the years, PPO has not wavered projecting its image as a world-class orchestra, consistently carrying the hallmark of symphonic excellence.

With enough amplification, the vocal corpus of the composite choir was palpable enough to be appreciated.

In the next group of carols, the choir did very well. Moderately listening was ensured by the beautiful rendition of the traditional carols "Silent Night" and "Adeste Fideles," all sung in Tagalog.

While diction was wanting in ensuring the concordance that ended the phrase, the singing was glorious.

Nostalgia

A whiff of nostalgia was brought by the singing of familiar Tin Pan Alley carols such as "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and the more recent "Happy Christmas (War Is Over)" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

Ferdi's Triumphal March brought down the house. The composite choir had to change gear from reverent to operatic singing, and the PPO played with much warmth and majesty in the solo passages devoted to ballet.

Dramatic fortgits was achieved with the placing of two groups, each consisting of three trumpets, placed at the end of the lateral boxes on the sides of the theater.

Lighting could have been more effective when done at the time of the playing, not before. Flooding the players with light even before they actually sounded their parts looked amateurish!

Even then, great, pleasurable listening was ensured, it became a hot topic after the concert.

Seeing throng of students from San Beda College attending the concert was a refreshing sight. They stayed throughout the concert and listened well!

The lobby spotted a catchy Yuletide décor that added festivity to the concert, courtesy of Rustan's. Mesh and chaos, the décor banged the spirit and augured well for the listening.

Don't miss the remaining concert series of the PPO next year. Be a proud subscriber in its concert season!

PPO plays marvelous Yuletide music

By Antonio C. Hila
Contributor

THE PHILIPPINE PHILharmonic Orchestra's (PPO) concert held recently at the CCP was a festive music making of glorious Christmas melodies which added luster to the long observance of Yuletide in the country.

The program includes which is a remarkable departure from the strict programming of the past that noted serious symphonic works. Of course, nothing is wrong with the inclusion of popular Christmas songs, for precisely a symphonic one should necessarily feature symphonic works, whose listeners abounds.

But Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, originally scheduled for this concert, was withdrawn off to give way to the additional carols as well as solo instrumental carols.

Conductor Rogelio Bañlaoi

CONDUCTOR Rogelio Bañlaoi

units for Trumpet and Orchestra in E flat Major, a real a Christmas carols, but was included in commemoration of the composer's 200th death anniversary.

Together with some selected choruses from the Christmas portion of Handel's "Messiah" and Corelli's Concerto Grosso in G Minor, the "Christmas Concerto," the program was a

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"FANTASTIC Mr. Fox" menagerie

By Jordan Mart S. de Leon
Contributor

ADAPTED FROM ROALD Dahl's 1970 children's novel of the same name, the movie "Fantastic Mr. Fox" is a stop-motion animated film that transforms its original kid-themed plot into one that can be appreciated by all audiences.

Mr. Fox (voiced by George Clooney) and his wife Mrs. Fox (Meryll Streep) live a simple and relatively quiet life with their son Ash (Jason Schwartzman) and visiting young nephew Kristofferson (Eric Chase Anderson).

But 12 years of a peaceful life proves to be too much for Mr. Fox's wild animal instincts, and he returns to his old ways as a cunning and devious chicken thief. In the process, he endangers not only his own family but the whole animal community as well.

As they become trapped underground without enough food, Mr. Fox, his family and the rest of the animals come together to fend off the three evil farmers—Boggis, Bunce and Bean—who are bent on capturing the elusive yet fantastic Mr. Fox no matter what the cost.

Magic

With the breakthrough of 3D technology, it would seem unusual for a film in stop-motion, one of the oldest styles of animation, to bring in life an old classic.

But the intricate architecture and custom thrown to the films, present to the book, coupled with the solid voice acting and a very entertaining plot, make the old-style animation feel contemporary.

All of the voice actors—Clooney, Streep, Bill Murray (as Clive Badger), Willem Dafoe (as Rat), Jarade Mulp (Grass Weasel)—and the rest of the cast provide good performances in the film. It is in the ingenuity and uniqueness of the characters and

FANTASTIC 3/3

GEORGE Clooney as Mr. Fox

MRS. FOX is voiced by Meryll Streep.

KIDS will love the wacky animation.

Fantastic old-style animation in adaptation . . .

From page B1

the actors voicing them when the film truly shines.

Larger than life

Animals appear larger than life and larger than their human counterparts in terms of wit and intellect, thanks largely to the wacky stop motion animation and their ability to act as if they were real humans.

There are several scenes that mirror modern-day human activities. For example, the foxes move from a hole to a tree, paralleling a human family moving from a small apartment to an upscale home.

Wlaw Ash appears to be rejected by his father in favor of his cool and witty cousin, Kristofferson, it mirrors a common problem of favoritism in the family.

As in Jack's book and film, there are many over-the-top human (and animal), apparently unnecessary.

Although children may have a little difficulty in comprehending the themes and situations, they can still appreciate the world's new of the animation (such as the animals' mannerisms) and many genuinely funny child-friendly moments.

In the end, despite the old-fashioned style of the film, "Fantastic Mr. Fox" came out to be a quaint and highly amusing adult fairy tale that even children can love.

Exhibit on Botong, Coching

THE DISCOURSE BETWEEN THE IDEAL art of painting and the low media of komiks and graphic design is explored in "Telling Modern Time: The Life and Art of Botong Francisco Coching," on view at National Museum of the Filipino People Dec. 11-Jan. 11.

Curated by Patrick D. Flores, the exhibit features some 300 works by Botong Francisco and Francisco Coching, spanning a fascinating range of materials, including komiks manuscripts, murals, prints, sketches and memorabilia.

"Telling Modern Time" offers an intelligent account of the complex and often antagonistic relationship between art and popular culture, which signaled the emergence of Philippine modernity.

Also on sale are "The Life and Art of Botong Francisco" and "The Life and Art of Francisco Coching," both edited by Flores and published by Vibal Foundation.

CAPTION "Botong" Francisco (topmost) and Francisco Coching

Hush in the rush

Amidst all the blessings, the parties, the nativity scenes and scintillating lights that are fancy accessorized to your after year, the best moment of the season is neither in the rush of holiday preparations nor in the grandeur of celebrations but in the silent hush you hear once that well-waited for gift is finally opened.

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DIGITAL IXUS

Exit strategy

By Rust S. De Vera

READERS MAY CONSIDER a three-volume autobiography the product of the writer's hubris. But when Carmen Guerrero Nakpil does so, one wonders if three volumes are enough.

Commencing with the female life in 2000's "Myself, Elsewhere," and continuing with the career society in 2003's "Legends & Adventures," the gifted memoirist traces the trajectory of her eventful life.

Now with "Exeunt" (Nakpil Publishing, Manila, 2009, 138 pages), Nakpil concludes her memoirs with aplomb. After all, one of her newspapers editorialized astutely points out: "You're the only woman I know who's a grandmom."

"Exeunt" begins with the whirlwind happenings of February 1986 as Nakpil is detained in Hong Kong. Then a government official, she has a front-row seat to the disassembling of the Marcos regime.

This is followed by her acerbic survey of the difficult Cory years, before bringing the reader to the present.

Along the way, Nakpil goes into her own self in a way unseen in the two previous books.

"For many years now I've had this queasy feeling that I'm the captive on this ship where the pirates have most, and I shall be made to walk the plank but no I can have the added treasure of saving all my friends go first," she writes. "There's almost no one left around me who's as old as I am."

Not holding back

This measured view of mortality pervades the rest of "Exeunt," with Nakpil not holding back on the topics that come her way.

"I have not yet ventured my opinion in the media, but a moment must deal with authenticity," she explains, launching into the assumption by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo: "She's also an apparent nihilist. She believes in nothing, holds nothing sacred, defies all threats and odds and retreads to live and reign forever, under her own terms."

By chronicling her personal life, Nakpil becomes an observer of the Filipinos' story.

As Nakpil takes stock of the country today, it is almost heartbreaking to see that the genteel world of Benita she remembered fondly in "Myself, Elsewhere" is completely gone.

"Being alive just to be able to influence people—a form of hypocrisy and mental dishonesty—went against my grain," she says. "Journalism are waste by nature."

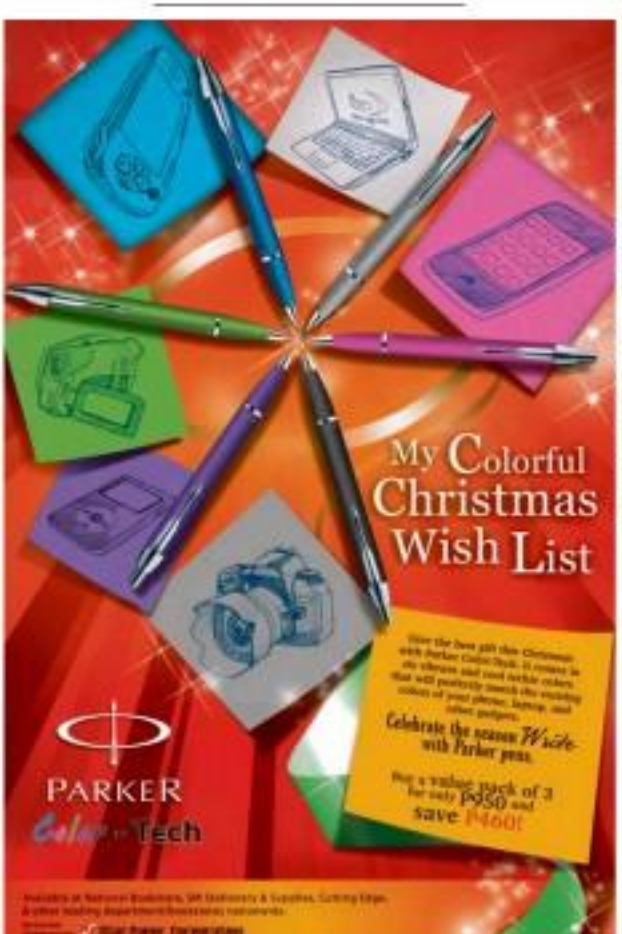
The event seems apt her approach in the writing life: "Writing is not magic. It is just a grind, and you do it or you don't. It's an arbitrary preference. Nothing to crow about."

Whereas "Myself, Elsewhere" recounted Nakpil's growing up and the tragedy of the war years, and "Legends & Adventures" explores her determined odyssey as a career woman, "Exeunt" is about her minimal masterpiece, the scrupulously edgy and elegant way she views the universe.

"The biggest tragedy is that we don't know ourselves, what and who we are, and most of us continue to nurse the sins and contrivances, looking for something God's always been inside, our true, still undiscovered selves," Nakpil writes, as "Exeunt" is all about Carmen Guerrero Nakpil as a Filipino: seamless in full, a worthy witness to nearly a century's worth of self-determination and woes.

Available at leading bookstores.

The final volume of Carmen Guerrero Nakpil's autobiographical trilogy reveals the author as a witness to the Filipino story



OMF LITERATURE Bookshop has opened a new branch at The Pergola, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong. During the Sept. 1 opening, book-lovers were treated to a store-opening discount of 20 percent off all OMF Lit local and imported books. Three also met OMF Lit authors. OMF Lit Bookshop Purokanya is open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Cebu bookshop sale

OMF LIT BOOKSHOP IS holding the 12 Sale Days for Christmas. Enjoy big discounts when you visit its Cebu branch on Dec. 14-19.

The sale consists of 20 percent off all OMF Lit titles; 25 percent off all imported titles; and 30 percent off all titles on Kadugan and Pinaree Bestsellers Buys.

The OMF Lit Bookshop branches rich resources for parents and children. Most titles for parents include:

"How to Win Your Child's Heart" by Dr. Ruth Zweig; "Disciplining God's Pictures for My Special Child" by Shirley Thompson Orbil; "One Year of Dinner Table Devotions and Discussion Starters" by Nancy Guthrie; and "One Year Mom for Women."

Call 531-6615 loc. 116.

Book on water festivals in Southeast Asia

THE NEWEST NSCH publication, "Celebrating the Source," focuses on the annual celebrations of the region involving sacred rivers and water as the source of physical and spiritual life.

This special publication, produced by the PortAsia Books, is the latest regional project of the Asian Committee on Culture and Information.

Asian groups together former Chancellors, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Lindy Peñaol Singapore authors the book. The National Commission on Culture and Arts of the Philippines (NCCA), is the implementing agency for this publication project. More than 35 photographers from around the world are featured.

"Celebrating the Source" was officially launched in the Philippines during the web meeting of the Committee on Culture and Information in Tuol Vino hosted in Tagaytay. NCCA executive director Cecile Guidote Alvarez and Ambassador Director presented the publication to the Asean delegations.

The book is available in major local and regional bookstores. For inquiries, e-mail info@artpostasia.com.

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Happiness and melancholia in Farley del Rosario's art

By Katrina Stuart Santiago
Contributor

IT IS DIFFICULT NOT TO BE HAPPY AT 1/10Gallery II, 1L Shops at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City (BGC) [illegible] when Farley del Rosario's works are on display.

That isn't the simple joy that's brought on by childhood images of carousels, one is it about the bright happy colors on Del Rosario's canvases. Instead, it is a happiness garnished on a sense of nostalgia, a joy grounded in a seeming melancholia.

His wit shines through, as well as a distinct perspective that seems to look at the world differently

On display is Del Rosario's "Bridged" —the one he had put together for Philsa's "10 Young and Exciting Artists" exhibit. Although without the original installation of miniature clay figures, it doesn't lose its daring color or [illegible] but might be one downhill.

On canvas, the artist's standard figure is surrounded by miniature versions of itself, all bound by the lines of communication which are directly attached to mouths and

HAPPINESS 01

After 50 years, Filipino printmakers leave a strong imprint

By Mara Coson
Contributor

AT THE CCP'S BULWAGANG JUAN LUNA, there was a quiet and church-like atmosphere (but with fluorescent lights instead of candles). Here, the Philippine Association of Printmakers (PAP) is holding its 50th anniversary, "Hakbas."

Printmaking, in spite of being highly technical, can be very accessible. A casual viewer can still appreciate both works of traditional printmaking and less traditional works. Such accessibility is one of PAP's aims over the past 50 years, through their lecture demonstrations and workshops held around the country. The exhibit showcases not only prints but printmaking tools such as the rocking press, engraving tools and plates.

Over 60 artists have their works on display, ranging from traditional woodcuts to hybrid forms of print making. On one side, you'll find Red Reyna Reyes's colored woodcuts of [illegible], on "Hanover to Lenin," and on the other, Ismil H. Ibrul's "Dilipped Gumtree," a collage/cel shank splattered with red stains.

AP 508 01

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Happiness and melancholia ...

From page E1

cues, in various dimensions and colors.

The issues of loss and struggles and the ways there are limited actions and/or are still a simplistic view of bridging communication. We are already bridged because we cannot remove ourselves from that issue, this noise, these conversations.

The seriousness of the subject matter is balanced by Del Rosario's bright and happy colors and his signature cartoon-like imagery. This dynamism between the serious and the light, the sad and the happy, is what allows for the accessibility of melancholia in his work. This does not across what seems to be his evolution in his more recent productions.

"Band of Brothers" highlights one's connection between two seemingly alike individuals, as it precisely draws plays the differences: One's mouth is in upside, the other's a wave; one's eyebrows are lifted the other's are heavily risen. It is the one who isn't speaking that has his hand hooked to the other's, as if holding onto every word uttered, and the moments in between.

It's an endearing but critical take on brotherhood, and the relationship that is necessary to coexistence.

"WIDGET"

Unconventional

It is this same unconventional take on relationships that Del Rosario works with "The Key To You," where a man and woman hold between them one heart and one key. They are as well bound by one body, within which their individual bodies exist, an obvious reference to notions of oneness and unity in mistaken love.

And yet this is not at all a romanticization of love, as the literal existence of key and heart put into question emotion and feelings, the impossibility of explaining love and its complexities.

In "The Key To You," Del Rosario's first of take on The Ideas that surround love removes it from our now-conventionalized notions of love as fixed/fixed commodity—that fixing we can't grasp or understand, but need to have anyway.

It is here, with love, that melancholia necessarily emerges the spectator away. And with Del Rosario's evolved Opuses to "Flowerbeds" and "Shoot Up," this melancholia is further refined with memories of childhood.

In "Flowerbeds," the conventional form is made unfamiliar by the large studio and pinches but fill the canvas.

"Shoot Up" flows headlong into the fantasies of Superheroes and Sentimentality—even when it also asserts a literal move up as movement.

It's Del Rosario's wit that shows through, as well as a distinct perspective that points to limits in the world differently. Here, there are no rose-colored glasses.

Instead, what Del Rosario does is look at the world on a ray vision; he reveals what we have put in the back of our heads, or have chocked behind our notion of adulthood.

JR DIAZ with real estate developer Lito Hernandez and his wife Eva, the artist's creditor, Cecile Diaz; and Ayannaveena Investment Corporation CEO Nene Diaz

JR Diaz mounts 9th solo exhibit in Pampanga

ARTIST JR DIAZ RECENTLY OPENED HIS ninth one-man show, "Full Circle," at C' Italian Dining (111 O. Luna Extension, in-gotten City Pampanga).

The "Icons-inspired interiors of the restaurant's new wing provided a fitting backdrop for the artist's oil and acrylic paintings, a bold mix of nature and abstract human themes, rendered mostly in warm, inviting colors and textured strokes.

Diaz's boldest works were produced from 2007 to 2009 are most evocative of the exhibit's title. The "Mango Mother" circular baskets full of the golden fruit symbolize the earth's rich bounty. The "Fish Singers" suggests the timelessness of songs that spring from the heart, evoking fiestas, family gatherings and wedding celebrations.

"The Piper," a new addition to Diaz's recent themes, is a brilliant rendition of a Piston and his music. Colors inspired in various shades of orange and blue, the painting evokes the Piper's lilting, lyrical notes, transporting the viewer to a serene, magical place.

Also inspired is Diaz's vivid impression of a Canadian forest in autumn, with scarlet, russet and golden leaves everywhere.

Leading the well wishers were Clark International Airport Corporation officials Victor Jose Lazatin and Laura A. Ortiz; Inno J. Arboleda, president of Hanna Top International, Inc.; Carmen Hizmeth of the Metro Clark Tourism Council; Rene Diaz, president and CEO of Ayannaveena Investment Corporation; real estate developer Lito Hernandez; and Charles Chua, president of 360 Media.

DIAZ and C' Italian Dining chef Chris Lester before "The Crow"

CHEF Erik and Michael Hirst before Diaz's "Fish Singers"

THE BOOK launch "A Nation of Zombies," subtitled "Pinoys Are Grossness, Chadless Elite, and the Cycle of Corruption in the Philippines," by Manuel E. Kalaw Jr., was recently launched at the Mary Hill School of Theology in Quezon City. The foreword was written by former Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. Marjon Gonzalez (3rd) is Chair Sonia Razo, writer of Sen. Raul Roco, gave a special message during the launch. (From left) Danilo Antonio and Kapatirang Party founder Mandy Pacheco, Jun Magsaysay, Patrick Nuezo, Sonia Roco, Eric Macaraig, the author, ABP director Baby Mendiga.

Resorts World Manila (RWM), the country's newest tourist destination, is now becoming one of the metro's premier entertainment spots.

Sue RWM isn't just about entertainment. As RWM Vice President Jeffrey K. Evers said, Resorts World Manila is also a place that offers international cuisine and global gaming. Boasting of numerous fine restaurants and world-class gaming areas, RWM is also a fantastic destination where one can indulge in delicious dishes and play thrilling games.

"Resorts World Manila is also a place that offers international cuisine and global gaming"

As if the endless entertainment, premium performances and fantastic facilities aren't enough to entice visitors to the place, RWM is giving us one more reason to go there – the Happy Hour promo.

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"RWM's Happy Hour promo gives guests the chance to enjoy more with a 50% discount on selected alcoholic beverages at The Bar 360"

With a Happy Hour promo in an ensemble spot like The Bar 360, guests can enjoy more drinks while watching world-class performances from internationally-acclaimed acts like St. Petersburg sensation and Icarus.

"We can make entertainment this good so much better if we have a happy hour"

The Happy Hour promo, coupled with the amazing acts at The Bar 360, have successfully and regularly drawn crowds to RWM. As one of RWM's satisfied customers said, "World-class acts 50% discount on Happy Hour! That's when I call entertainment. What more could you ask for?"

The Perfect Reason To Go To RWM

They have five restaurants. They have world-class performances. They have gaming areas. They also have luxury hotels. And soon, RWM will also feature a posh shopping center, premium cinemas, a performance theater and more. These should be more than enough reasons for anyone to visit RWM.

But with offers like the Happy Hour promo, you have one more perfect reason to go wine and dine at Resorts World Manila – the place to play.

Manila plays host to exhibit of top Mexican artists

"VINTORILA MEXICANOS DE SAN LUIS Potosí" (Divisionist Painters from San Luis Potosí), an exhibition by four Mexican artists, recently opened at the Ayala Museum and runs until Dec. 18.

"Pintores Divisionistas de San Luis Potosí" is a collection that features 24 paintings and new montages of fabrics by four young, visual artists from San Luis Potosí: José Angel Robles, Ilian Verónica Gómez Cervantes, Irma Luz Manrique and Anik Manuel Hernández, who are all siblings, that's correct. The name of the collection is a reference to San Luis Potosí, Mexico, their home and source of inspiration.

Bound near libraries's geographic source, San Luis Potosí can be located on the Mexican plateau, a vast expanse of arid desert land that extends over a large area of southern and central Mexico. It is from this desert landscape, the typical representation of the San Luis Potosí region, that these four artists have drawn the inspiration for the works in the collection.

Robles' abstract expressionist works represent his artistic interpretation of landscapes familiar to him. The desert of his native San Luis Potosí serves as his subject.

Cisneros's works in the exhibit interpret the passage of time and space through the urban landscape, using architectural elements as references.

Manrique invites the spectator to reflect on the inner, inherited meanings present in the pieces of textile. Through each interwoven fiber, the works depict the artist's attempts at unravelling emotion.

Frías' works reveal the influence of engraving. This is evident in his use of textures in his depiction of feminine landscapes, allowing him much liberty to inundating the subdivision of his works.

"Pintores Mexicanos de San Luis Potosí" is a testament to the ubiquity of inspiration, which can spring forth from even the most barren of places.

After 50 years, Filipino...

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There are a number of striking relief prints, such as Manuel Arañaes's "Encounter" woodcut—a close-up of Magellan and Lapu-lapu staring head-on at each other, details of Magellan's hat and Lapu-lapu's head scarf and armaments.

There's Jonathan Olaivar's "Lazy Bones" **cubiform**, with a man in the middle of fire, with a whitened bone against a black background, arbe tila his head in lastowa.

The etchings (precisely at the exhibit show the artists' **method** was produced a variety of results. There is Jovenal Isaac's dark etching "Equinox," resembling a dark forest, and Ismael's most striking "Mixed Objects," where there is a view of a cupboard with a man within a mesh of a cattle's skeleton a chair's cushion.

The exhibit shows creative subjects presented in different ways. There is a lithograph by Virgilio Aviado called "The Genius of Gluttonize Lands to the Destruction of Men," as if the men were imploding upon the explosion of the atomic bomb; and Rolando Olave's collography, "Games," two-dyed olive laborers the soil of land worked with."

In the gallery you'll also find Aviado's "The Beast" series lithographs, this work drawn by an artist with each frame like studies of a beast's movements, as well as the use of actual film reels to let Aviado's Gaia in "Film Movie."

As some works continue to seem traditional methods of print making, some redefine it. The exhibit has Fernando Modesto's print of iron inked body on a sheet of paper, rendering this print unrepeatable, and Raymundo Albano's reproduction of 1975 of a hand-moved where visitors are invited to make prints (which captioned the gist on the ground as I walked).

Having an traditional printmaking theme, Obrin Celestron Tropa's "The Third Homunt," a color viscosity etching, depicts what seems to be a man in a mask inside gauze.

With prints of photocopied "Mona Lisa" dressed in Filipinianas, lighter planes, serigraphs with a ruler beneath it, prints of textbook, embalming directions; a picture of a running woman behind a translucent overlay, the concept of works presented drawn it is not only in multiple subjects that make printmaking highly possible, but it is also in its way to present originality in multiple ways.

Singapore photos at Silverlens

Select works from the Singapore International Photography Festival 2008 will travel to Manila for a month-long exhibition until Jan. 9, 2010, hosted by Silverlens Gallery (2/F FMC Bldg. S. 2328 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati; 8186044, 0917.5874615; www.silverlensphoto.com). SIPF is a biennial gathering of minds from around the world with the common pursuit of advancing the art and appreciation of photography. The 2008 SIPF hosted juried exhibitions, workshops and portfolio reviews. Ina Lorenzo, Silverlens Creative Director was one of the panelists of SIPF 2008, participating in the portfolio critiques. As well as giving a talk on Collecting Photography.

VISUAL ARTS

Dazole et al. at Podium

Pilipino Group of Companies celebrates the opening night of the 12th anniversary of Watsonas and its baggage collection with an exhibit called "Masterpiece," Dec. 14, at The Atrium G/F The Podium, Ortigas, Mandaluyong, 3479871, 0922-8654760). Featured are works by sculptors Jon Dazole, Fred and Wil son Buhlemen, and painters Rany Sabile, Tiamo Castillo and Mike Idolelan. The exhibit focuses on the fusion of art and market, which aesthetics remains a core consideration despite busy marketplaces. There will also be a silent auction of a limited-edition Victorinox Swiss Champion.

'Christmas Treasures' at Duravilla

Galleria Duravilla (230 Jorge L. Bunay, 8520990) presents "Christmas Treasures" until Jan. 20, 2010. It collection featuring works by fernando desamito, Victorio Manansala, Fernando Zobel, Romeo Tabuena, HR Ocampo, Arturo Luz, Jose Joya, Rolando Nadera, Nena Saguil, Lee Aguinaldo, Mario Cruz, Luz Lindoro, Roberto Roldan, Tony Tenga, Gus Albor, Jaanus and Dudley Dee. There will also be a modern jewelry exhibit from Ethichill.

Rardio at Pasco

"Fish out of Water," featuring Jun Rardio's new works, is on view in Pasco Gallery (Avenell, 4/L Bldg. 4, 6810Mega mall, Mandaluyong, 7005534, 0922-8270126; www.pascogallery.com) until Dec. 31. What some neo-pins are the artist's wits, humor, spontaneity and originality as he tackles, this time, fish themes that show different circumstances or situations that people find or find themselves in. For this show, Dan interprets the fish motif to travel set internal and metaphysical juxtapositions.

Lorenzana at Blab

"The Midnight Lullaby," by Luz Lorenzana is on view in Blab's 20 Square Gallery (2/F FMC Bldg. S. 2328 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati; 8186044, 0917.5874615; www.silverlensphoto.com) until Jan. 9, 2010. A preview to the biggest solo show in September 2010, "The Midnight Lullaby" combines the artist's technical application of the play between light and shadows, while staying true to its pop art, animation and surreal imagery influences. The exhibit will be shown alongside "Individuelle" by Gary Ross Pastrana.

Leyva in literatures

Bet. Pastel Gene Leyva's "Glorious Manifestation II" is on view until Dec. 20 at Galeria de las Islas (2/F Glalda Center 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila; 5272150). The show features over 20 paintings in oil depicting scenic views and common embossed images of visual postcards.

Babayan photos at UST

"Campaña Nuts Mission, Babuyan Islands," features works by a priest and six photographers. It opens today and runs until Dec. 19 in the Main Building Lobby of the University of Santo Tomas. Artists include Rolly Magpayo, RG Salas, Mon Hernandez, Mon Gorpin, Gary Sarmiento, Dan Schwartz and Fr. Jomar Sibug, OP. The results exhibit documents the scene, but poor in basic needs, island.

Santos at Artinformal

Jose Santos III's "(Un) Common" is on view until Jan. 9, 2010 at Artinformal (2/F Connecticut 31, Greenhills East, Mandaluyong, 7230818; www.artinformal.com). The series re-configures the constructs of perception with images of shrubs, shrine and labels, shells and rocks.

Mendoza in Rockwell

"Fanciana," Ben Mendoza's fourth exhibit, opens at Ani. 8, 2010, at Le Souffle in Rockwell.

Hermes Alegre et al. at Ateneo

"Silverballs II" runs at Galeria Ateneo (Rockwell, 4/L Bldg. A, 105 Mayapis, Mandaluyong, 9819941) until Dec. 31. Featured artists are Jose Alfaro, Herman Alegre, Natividad Alvarado, Ricky Arabejo, Jose Arcerio, Max Balistoy, Mabel Bonoan, Abel Cabatan, Chico, Jimmy Coquilla, Bill Ural, Joseph de Jesus, Ric Elemento, Ferdinand Demolero, Neil Enderson, Roberto Feleo, Dennis Filart, Friendlier, Fritz Ibarra, Jerry Ilang, Louie Ignacio, Jun Impas, Ferdinand Lanzarote, Jaime Manpaberang Jr., Lee Marcos, Dennis "Gin" Monterey, Bobby Nuevo, Tony Avalos, Jun Polanco, Jojo Rocha, Iqbal Sanaa, Kirby Roxas, Lito Solcedo, Christian Tamondong, EJ Tuanelo, Valeo Valerio, Ofen Ferrazon and Dobry Ypon. The artists were selected for their fresh and original approach to art-making.

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We find ways

New works by Malang and children featured in calendar

MULTI-AWARDED FILIPINO VISUAL ARTIST Mauro "Malang" Santos may have already churned out many masterpieces in his prolific career. But this year, the genre painter goes further by coming up with new works that will be used to help paint a better future for the victims of Tropical Storm "Ondoy."

Malang, his sons Steve and Seven, and daughter-in-law Ilona, are the featured artists in 888 radio station EDSA's special edition 2010 calendar entitled "Mga Gabi at Umaga Likhang Pinoy" which was launched last Nov. 27 in Greenhills E in Mahaon City.

The calendar, which will be given as supplements of EDSA Radio's Patrol 888, EDSA Telebalita and www.dzmm.com.ph, showcased the different styles of the famous artists.

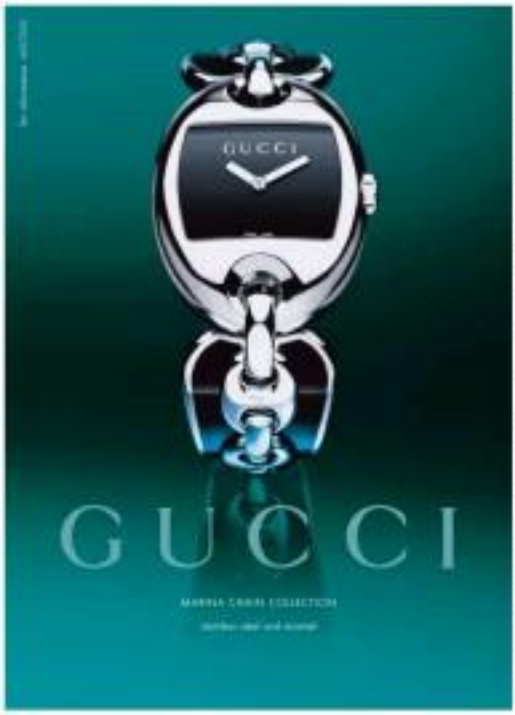
Malang is known in art circles for his trademark depiction of traditional women, while his son Steve has made a name with his paintings of cityscapes. Ilolay, on the other hand, takes inspiration from nature and the environment while his wife Mona is known for her different interpretations of flowers.

Part of the launch was a two-day exhibit of the works the batteries made for the calendar, which is mainly animated buyers. Malang, Steve, Ilolay and Mona have donated half of the sales from their paintings to support EDSA's efforts to help rebuild life by the recent typhoons in consultation with ABS-CBN Foundation's Sagip Kapamilya.

MONA Santos with the boys of her paintings

ONE of Mona's creations

"WOMAN," By Malang



Colorful Christmas tableau

CHRISTMAS decor at COD Greenhills

THE LONG-RUNNING TRADITION OF the COD annuncio display marks another year at its new home in Greenhills Shopping Center (GSC) in San Juan.

Now on its seventh staging at GSC, the 2009 display is themed "The Birth of Jesus Christ, the Christmas Story."

According to Joey Mateo, GM of Greenhills Shopping Center: "This year, we are going back to the theme of our first display seven years ago, which is the story of the Nativity. We thought it would be the best time to re-stage the Nativity given the recent calamities and tragedies that befell our country."

"When we first staged the Nativity seven years ago, it was short and simple. It was the first time we were hosting the COD display after transferring from Cubao."

"This year, we will have a bigger and grander Nativity animated show, starting from the Annunciation to the birth of Jesus Christ."

"We hope that our shoppers will enjoy the re-staging of the Nativity and that it would help reinvigorate our sense of hope. After all, the birth of Jesus Christ is one story that is timeless and never gets out of style," he added.

The Christmas tableau will be displayed until Jan. 3, 2010, with shows every 30 minutes from 6:30-11 p.m.

'Flora Filipina' traces Mexican roots of Philippine plants

ONE WOULD NEVER HAVE THOUGHT that the bamote (sweet potato) or kamatis and similar plants commonly considered as indigenous to the Philippines, had actually made a long voyage on the Galleons' Trade before taking root in Philippine soil.

A new book, "Flora Filipina—from Acapulco to Manila," traces the origins of these botanical travelers on the galleons that sailed to the shores of the Philippines.

Published by Art HostAsia, the beautifully illustrated book explains Christmas plants that have become integrated in the culture of the Filipinos as both material and social. Each of the 11 species featured in the book are presented with their scientific names and descriptions with attention on how each of them have become part of the culture and lives of Filipinos—in their cuisine, their clothing and their ways of life.

The book is based on an exhibition, "Flora Filipina from Mexico to Manila," which shows how these were part of the history of the Galleon Trade and how they enabled the native landscape and lives of the local population. The Galleon Trade brought highly cultivated crops to the Philippines like the avocado, Australia, pifia (pineapple), Asmate (tomato), kakaw (cacao), mani (peanut) and vanilla (vanilla), to name some. The exhibition was made possible by a bilateral agreement between the Embassy of Mexico and the Philippines.

PIPLI dried specimen by Hemeroscallis Zingis jr. Inscription by Phanelito Bernardo

The authors of "Flora Filipina from Mexico to Manila" are Gemma S. Alviña, director of the National Museum of the Philippines, and Domingo A. Madulid, curator of the Botany Division of the National Museum.

Other ArtHostAsia titles with the National Museum are "Museum Treasures of Southeast Asia," "Changuifion Plates Found in the Philippines," and "Oaths of Origins, the Anthropomorphic Heritage."

PERFORMING ARTS IN THE 4TH QUARTER

Koreans steal the show

By Amado Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE SECOND PHILIPPINE PHILHARMONIC Orchestra concert, under American guest conductor Robert Ryker, was highlighted by the stupendous Symphony No. 9 (Choral) by Beethoven.

Ryker conducted at a pace some felt was too brisk, but it seemed to have galvanized the musicians and the chorus mes: University of Santo Tomas (Singers), Ateneo de Manila College Glee Club, and University of the Philippines Singing Ambassadors. These three are among the best of our national choirs, and the conductor was visibly impressed by their vocal parathetics.

Of the four soloists, it was Korean soprano Jeong-Hyo Shin whose voice rose above the din of the ovations. Ryker was obviously captivated by her singing.

There were repeated curtain calls and a standing ovation from the capacity crowd at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

A month later, with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra led this time by Korean conductor Jae-Asun Lee, another Korean soprano, Yun Kyoung Si, brought the house down with her rendition of French and Italian arias.

In response to the chorus—a real chance, not a fake political chorus—said, as an encore, she interpreted Abelardo's "Munyin ng Pasig"—with perfect diction.

Tanghalang Pilipino had another winner in "Madonna Sisa ng Himbing," an adaptation by Bon Pinpin-ero of Brecht's "Mother Courage and Her Children," transplanted to the war in Mindanao during the Marcos and Ramda regimes, and directed by Nonie Horilla (at CCP's Tanghalang Huseng Batute).

There were various performances from the cast, led by Shamaine Centenera as Madonna. Rolly Caldera as a mercenary priest; Rashlyn Castillo as the mute daughter and an array of Mindanao tribals speaking in authentic Visayan and Muslim accents.

The production was enhanced by neo-ethnic music from the Davao-based Mebuyan Band, appropriate songs and martial arts-cinematical choreography.

Chamber group

The Manila Chamber Singers celebrated its 30th anniversary with a gala 10-language concert at the Philamlife Theater on UN Avenue, Manila—a venerable institution with excellent acoustics which predates the CCP. The repertoire was eclectic, from sacred to pop and folk.

In one novelty number ("Boogie Wonderland"), the members, including choirmaster José Emmanuel D. Aquino, showcased their dancing skills. Boogie-woogie, hip-hop, R&B and what-have-you. But more challenging and captivating were the international songs (from France, Czech Republic and Macedonia) and unfamiliar but en-

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National Artist F. Sionil José's 'Pragres' is performed in his hometown

By Raul Dupaillo Jr.
Contributor

NATIONAL Artist in Literature F. Sionil José during an open forum

SCENES from "Pragres" performed in SM City in Rosales, Pangasinan

DILAOG! SINT LAWS! Ensemble, a group of students and alumni of Philippine High School for Arts, recently staged "Pragres," a play on corruption in the government, in one of the mall theaters of SM City in Rosales, Pangasinan.

"Pragres" formed part of the inviting program undertaken by Tanghalang Pilipino (Cultural Center of the Philippines's resident theater company). Based on a short story by National Artist for Literature F. Sionil José, the play provided the audience a zany yet dramatic look at a very familiar political issue.

It dramatized the travails of Marina Salcedo (portrayed by Miriam Lalicanfilet), a provincial senior clerk who excitedly goes to Manila to follow up her long-overdue promotion.

Marina's star soon turns to despair as she moves a string of quirky, do-nothing government employees (all amazingly performed by the talented Ena Gabriel)—from a carefree male security guard to a cranky female employee who prefers finishing her plate of spaghetti instead of locating documents, to a lecherous manager who tries to take advantage of Marina.

Her misfortune continues as she encounters a black-masked guy (also portrayed by Gabriel) who snatches her bag containing all the vital documents she needs for her promotion.

Marina ends up miserably decimated, smirking victim against the system that did her in.

Sharing the stage as each scene was a chorus, composed of members of the Dalisay Tripit Lawin Ensemble, that made explicit the thoughts and sentiments of Marina.

Open forum

At show's end, the audience heartily applauded and congratulated the performers.

An open forum followed with José as guest, who hails from Rosales. He congratulated the performers on stage and exchanged pleasantries with the audience mostly students.

"No artist works in isolation. All are has outstanding, especially great art," he reminded them.

Jack is one of the most widely read Filipino writers in the English language. His novels and short stories depict the social underpinnings of class struggles and colonialism in Filipino society.

"The Rosales Saga" is a five-novel masterpiece that covers three centuries of Philippine history consisting of "The Pretenders," "Tree," "My Brother, My Executioner," "Mass" and "Po-on."

"Pragres" was launched in May 2009 as the first Forum, conducted by the CCP at the National Arts Center in Los Baños, Laguna.

Peninsula lights charity Christmas tree

THE PENINSULA MANILA IS DISPLAYING TWO evergreen trees in its lobby as part of Peninsula Hotels' worldwide Trees of Hope campaign. Guests will be invited to purchase an ornament to hang on the tree to benefit the local chapter of Make-A-Wish Foundation.

The trees were traveled Nov. 27 by Pinky Aquino-Abellada and 11 children with special wishes. Ornaments may be purchased for P800 each.

The Trees of Hope campaign runs until Dec. 31.

UP THERE: Children with special wishes witness the lighting of the 45-ft Christmas tree at The Peninsula Manila lobby. Guest of honor Pinky Aquino-Abellada and GM Jonathon Dyck lead the ceremony.

Korean soprano wows CCP audience

Yun-Kyoung Yi shone along with Filipino tenor Randy Gillongo and baritone Noel Azcona

By Pablo A. Tariman
Lifestyle Editor

KOREAN soprano Yun-Kyoung Yi is surrounded by violins during a rousing encore of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Korean conductor Jae-Joost Lee.

OF THE FOREIGN PERFORMERS I have watched in Manila in the last 30 years, only the following remain indelibly etched in my mind: the Manila debut of Montserrat Caballé; Philippine debut of Stella Maris; 1990 grand-prize winner of the Maria Callas International Voice Competition; Voces of Eva Martinez Ioppolo Placido Domingo's the Madrigal Singers; Ely of Riko Wakisaka; and the Violeta of Tetiana Fabricetti, Both La Boda production of "Floritas in Tokyo" and her Manila debut in the Rolando Tinio production).

Korean soprano Yun-Kyoung Yi was impressive as soloist in the singing season of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Korean conductor Jae-Joost Lee. Yun's the only one, indeed, she had nothing to fear from La Mitterrand.

To top it all, the school's every Italian bon vivantness of La Pietrasanta. This was under standable, after all, she was a prizewinner of the Belfiol International Concours in Italy.

Filipino singers

One gets excluding the Callas of Center of the Philippines event was going to be an excellent source from the way Lee led the orchestra in Berlioz's "Roman Carnival" Overture, Op. 9. His reading went beyond perfunctory and offered a refreshing musicality difficult to ignore.

The concert was graced by two Filipino singers who did very well.

Tenor Randy Gillongo had the voice and the emotion for Gaetano's "Come un bel di di maggio" from "Andrea Chenier" and was rousing cheers. Baritone Noel Azcona proved he was a baritone of consequence when he sang with "Il is a "Rigoletto" duet.

When Yi appeared for the opening number, Debbie's "Les Filles de Cadix," she entranced the audience as she filled the hall with her power and lyricism. The glittering soprano wowed and everyone got a sense of comfort as it should be magnificently executed.

Her voice had a dynamic range that enabled her to nail from pianissimo to fortissimo with astounding results. The surprise of it all is that she was also a natural actress.

There was much to care about in "Parce le lieu" from "Rigoletto" where she appeared to be engaged with the Filipino baritone. Here you see another side of the singer that spelled perfect rapport with a co-artist.

Azcona reciprocated the soprano's gushes with his handed of delightful jaunt in a duet that brought out the best in this popular "Rigoletto" duet.

Her last number, Verdi's "Il trovatore... ecoppe Morte" from "Il trovatore," Yi demonstrated the full range of her supreme vocal instrument.

Here she read on the dramatic finish line with unbelievable vocal control culminating her top notes without losing dynamic intensity. At the end, she electrified Manila audiences and she got a standing ovation before the concert finale, Dvorak's Eighth Symphony.

Gerard Salonga with Lical

With Yi's appearance in the 09/10 season, she finally ended the long drought for sopranos. Her guest singers at the CCP Concert Salonga will finally debut with Cecile Licad in a multi-work concerto in January of next year, along with cellist Raphael Jimenez in a two-work concerto.

He is the only Filipino young conductor with engagements abroad. He will conduct two concerts with cellist Lee in Manila and Singapore. Then he flies to Hong Kong to lead the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra at the opening concert-up of the Akira Kurosawa 100 exhibit.

Native performing Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet Overture," and a suite from Yoe Takemitsu's score to Kurosawa's epic film, "Ran," he said, "It's going to be intense. It's also the first time the Hong Kong orchestra has asked me to come over purely as a conductor and not as an singer."

Asked why he recorded important works of Filipino composers from Lucio San Pedro to Angel Peña even as classical CDs hardly sell in this country, he answered: "I will never lose faith in the Filipino audience. If not now, next year, 10 years from now, the audience will want to hear these works. I'd like them to be available. They're part of our national art history and must be preserved and heard."

Koreans steal the show

From page F1

gaging folk songs from Antique, Iloilo and the Ilocos.

Ricardo Pimentel (nee "Spring Awakening" (BOR) Theater, directed by Chan Antopenchayat was an intense, melodramatic and at times shocking musical about Russian German youth during the late 1900s century, with parents and schoolmasters depicted as insensitive and unenlightened.

The stunning Lianpi Valdez, Kelly Lee, et all, singing and dancing choreography by Denise Santos-Lim met one's expectations.

The music was gripping and lyrical by turns, but not the kind that would produce standards. It was not something you could hum at home, to paraphrase what music lover Eggie S. Apostol once said about another production years ago).

Lisa's jubilee

Prima ballerina Lisa Macuja celebrated her 25th year in ballet with show-long performances at Ritz Theater (CCP Complex), culminating in a solo-delivery performance at Ritz in "Don Quixote," admirably partnered by Ruby du Dino.

What will she do now for an encore? "Swan Lake," which is also technically demanding, if not more so? Well, there's always the ever-popular "Giselle".

Sparks flew between Rudy Hidden and Bell Rose Sese as Blanche Dubois and Stanley Kowalski, respectively in "Sang bulaang Filipinas's "Photos para los Muertos" (at CCP's Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino), directed by Floy Quintos's).

Nikkito and Jose did justice to their emotionally wrenching roles, with able support from the ensemble, notably Meryll Soriano as Stella, the feisty wife; and Jonathan Tadioan as Blanche's "mama's boy" suitor, Mitch.

Seen once again after 20 years, this Filipino translation by the late Orlando Nadres of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" remains as repressive, a showcase for acting.

Opera buffs had a field day with "Opera Extravaganza!" (a concept of the Manila Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Molina), featuring top-notched soprano Camille Lopez and New York-based Margarita Gomez, who both sang superbly.

Lopez elevated the squeamy crowd at Philamlife Theater with arias from Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" and Verdi's "Don Carlo," while Gomez had her shining moment in the Verdi aria "Tacea la notte." Rafael Manila followed up by theater spectacle "Lola Dayang" with a show that was, well, even more spectacular: literary Hall of Justice Ed Marzan's "Mama: Si Lilbel at si Dolores."

In two-bid Lisa Macuja flying through the air à la Giselle, an awe-inspirational feats tale, captivating sets and costumes, epileptic choreography (by Osan Ramos and Lysando Francisco), special effects, lasts and fireworks.

Kudos to Ballet Manila, which really knows how to popularize ballet, bring in the crowds and thrill the kids.

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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

SHAMAINE Centenera-Buencamino (seen here as Elizabeth I) and Ana Abad Santos as Mary Stuart in Dulaang UP's production of Schiller's "Maria Stuart," directed by Tony Mabesa

BRAVO! BEST OF THEATER 2009

Season of 'sturm und drang'

Actresses Ana Abad Santos and Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino dominate the year of 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng'

By Gibbs Cadiz

ROYAL DAYLIGHT cops uncommon year of German drama in Manila." That's an efficient if rather glib way of summing up the year about to close, weaving in it does the three main impetus that marked local theater in 2009.

First, the German connection: by some serendipitous alignment of stars, various theater companies blanketed the city with a glut of Teutonic plays: two Brechts ("Imahinang Pilipino's "Madonna Brava ng Mendiola," a reworking of "Mother Courage and Her Children," and World Theater Presents' "The Threepenny Opera"); two Wedekinds (Dulaang UP's "Lulu" and Alliance Productions' "Spring Awakening," the Duncan Sheik musical based on the Wedekind play); one Kleist ("Amphitryon") and one Schiller ("Mary Stuart"), both by Dulaang UP, which could have prompted the naive notion its season devoted to German drama.

One more is in the offing—director's "The Bluebirds Rise of Antares II," set to open in February.

Next, the abundance of powerhouse roles for actresses and the curiously narrow scope at the other end of the gender spectrum.

Unlike last year when actors, especially show-stopping veterans, raided the roost with multidimensional plays and the Cantabile Theater's "Milking Abe" and TPI's "Mga Gorilya sa Hawak Kamay," this year's theatrical pantheon consisted mostly of iconic women: Cassandra and Paula in Nick Joaquin's "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipina"; Blanche DuBois in Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire"; Elizabeth I and her royal nemesis in "Mary Stuart"; Aling de la Kina in the revival of Floy Quintos' piece in the late universals genre, along with Queen Wilcadia in Ida "Nay Kabuhayhinan ng Mga Bayan"; Veronica, the long-lost matriarch in Israeli playwright Savyon Liebrecht's "Apples From the Desert"; and, not the least, Mrs. Lovett in Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd."

To the extent that an actress would be able to reign over such an inviting landscape, two actually did.

Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino continued to rule the boards with her Aling, Queen Yolanda, Madonna Brava and Elizabeth I. But 2009 was as much Ana Abad Santos' year as hers, with a string of exceptional appearances from Dominique Cavallida to Julia (in "Dead Years," Antero Astrid's adaptation of the seminal 1925 Pio Marquez Benitez short story) to Mary Stuart and Blanche DuBois—a run quite hard to top.

Gratifyingly, her Blanche played for only one weekend, right after inspired stints "Closer" Isabelle somehow sweet she was excellent. We failed to catch that production, however, so it is not included in this roundup, the absence not a judgment on its merits either way.

(A side pattern, if you will: Three plays ruled textually explicit themes—"Lulu," "Spring Awakening" and "Theses pero hi Maestro," the Filipino version of "Servanna," which are caught, both literalness elevated by Quiroz—baked in quickies pulses on screen touch boss. See think sex and high-minded Mary theater incompatible?)

Finally who would have thought Centenera-Buencamino's and Abad Santos' parallel tracks would converge in an actual face-off courtesy of "Mary Stuart?"

That promise raged into reality the last straight play to close in Manila this past November, beloved, to say the parade. Here are what are proposed as the best of Manila theater in 2009:

Best Play (One-Act)

"Ibon Mandaragit, Gagamitin ang Bayan" (Layers Bloom; writer: Rando Bumagat, director). The personal is powerfully political in this savage exploration of family grievances sponsored by all-too-familiar economic disparities and social ambitions. "Energy and originality are the two vital forces of any new good play," said the playwright Rosadora Linsangan. This one has both in spades.

Honorable mentions: "Isang Araw sa Kamalig" (Nicolas Pichay; Chris Millado, dir.); "Mary Get' ang Gitara ni Maestro" (Shelli's Adventures; Carlo Jacobo Garcia, dir.); "Midlife" (Raoul Midlon Aguila; Edna Vida Frolian, dir.); "Ari" (Jonathan Bess, Filipino translator by William Mancum; Dr. Valera, dir.)

Best Play (Full-Length)

"Mary Stuart" (Friedrich von Schiller, Filipino translation by Allan Pildes; Tony Mabesa, dir.). Bitter distinction aside (the superlative videographies, the wildly uneven acting styles of the supporting cast, generally in the English version), Mabesa's staging of the titanic clash of two formidable women in history made for a rich, engrossing spectacle of wits and ideas, rendered more memorable by the

SEASON 02

Former envoy to Spain is new CCP president

FORMER PHILIPPINE Ambassador to Spain Isabel Cuyo Wilson is the new president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Elected by the Board of Trustees last week, Wilson was presented to the CCP staff during their general assembly on Dec. 8 by chair Emily Abrera.

FURTHER 02

SCENES from the Music Theater Project production of Bertolt Brecht's "The Threepenny Opera," directed by Anton Juan and staged at the PETA Theater Center

BRAVO! BEST OF THEATER 2009

Season of 'sturm und drang'

Pretzeque G2

cannot-bear performances celebrated by its principals.

Honorable mentions: "A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino" (Nick Joaquin; José Wint Arellano, dir.); "Amphitryon" (Heinrich von Kleist, Filipino translation by Jerry Respicio; Jose Estrella, dir.); "Apples from the Desert" (Tanyag Lintawaks, Filipino translation by Lisa Magtanog; Nonie Buencamino, dir.); "Bituin at Isabel" (Rody Vera; Maribel Legarda, dir.); "Kung Paano Magkaroon ng Kaluluwa" (George de Jesus III, artistic director)

Best Actor-Play

Amantino Tadioan ("Dios Resurrexion, Gagamasin ang Bayan"). Undertaking five dearth of commanding parts for lead actors in full-length productions this year (or, at least, commanding parts adequately played) is Tadioan's turn as the murderous backwoods cousin—at only 45 minutes, a breakthrough part the young actor nailed to blankly impressive dimensions.

Honorable mentions: Rhi Bautista (Dios Resurrexion, Gagamasin ang Bayan"); Paulo O'Hara ("Isang Ikaw sa Kawalan"); Bembol Roco ("Kung Paano Magkaroon ng Kaluluwa"); Lee Aljay ("Apples from the Desert"); Jaime de la Paz ("Ari")

Best Actress-Play

Ana Abad Santos ("Mary Stuart"). Fiery in her wrath and icy in her stillness, Abad Santos' hypnotic, majestic-like Mary Stuart is, quite simply, one of the finest, most lucid pieces of acting work we've seen in many a theatergoing season. That it came in the same year she played Gaudiola in Rep's "Perfumed" and Blanche Dubois in PPA "Streetcar" is all the more astonishing.

Honorable mentions: Stella Cañete, Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino and Bernice Mirkin ("Mary Stuart"); Ana Abad Santos, Irma Adlawan and Liza Banzuan ("A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino"); Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino ("Mukhang Hiram ng Mirabano"); Sherry Lara ("Apples from the Desert"); Dinna Mendoza ("Amphitryon"); Sheryl Labastilla ("Isang Ama sa Kawalan"); Shayna Bautista ("Ang Manunungaya sa Ilog")

Best Featured Actor-Play

Dido de la Paz ("A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino"). Show pennant was De la Paz's delineation of Don Perico in Nick Joaquin workhorse? Simply, flat right after his glorious "Cocteau monsters" monologue, you could actually feel the play shifting gears toward a different resolution, gaining new traction from the benediction it has to offset.

Honorable mentions: No citations

Best Featured Actress-Play

Peewee O'Hara ("Apples from the Desert"). A Jewish spinster—a fiasco back to boot—with a formidable palette of wistfulness and whimsy? O'Hara's take on this colorful caricature was altogether wise and enchanting, the zaniquet of dreadful comments some in a Jewish Orthodox household bring went apart by winds of change.

Honorable mentions: Angeli Bayani ("Dios Resurrexion, Gagamasin ang Bayan"); Kathlyn Castillo ("Madrasta Itinuro ng Matabunke")

Best Musical

"The Threepenny Opera" (play by Bertolt Brecht, music by Kurt Weill; Anton Juan, dir.): To breathe scholar Eric Bentley, "to breathe life into [a revival] you must either recapture the spirit of the original or by new insight create life." By this benchmark, Juan's "Threepenny Opera" was a resounding—triumph in its deep-vocal flavor, yet magnanimous in its fidelity to the play's humane, incendiary impulses. Sung and acted by a topnotch cast, this wrappy musical blessed its audience with something other than plain swashbuckling. Rep's "Sweeney Todd," a worthy candidate in this category, left you overwhelmed; "Threepenny Opera" left you enlightened.

Honorable mentions: "Sweeney Todd" (music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by Hugh Wheeler; Ric Ry Barredo and Michael Williams, dirs.); "Si Juan Tamad, ang Dyablo at ang Limang Milyong Boso" (music and lyrics by Vince de Jesus; Phil Noble, dir.); "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" (music and lyrics by William Finn, book by Rachel Sheinkin; Bobby Garcia, dir.); "S.O.A.P. (No Ordinary Aquatic Habitat)" (music by Rony Peralta, book, lyrics and direction by Jaime del Mundo)

Best Actor-Musical

Audie Gemora ("Sweeney Todd"). We would've preferred a darker, more tragic Sweeney on top of the basic gifts Gemora brought to title arduous role—his authoritative presence, the robust vocals, his obvious ease with bloodletter. Still, with few if any, front-running performances this year, his qualities are already the most accomplished.

Honorable mentions: Joaquin Valdez ("Spring Awakening"); Eric Reyes ("Rent"); Jon Jones ("Song of Joseph"); Tony Guzman ("The Threepenny Opera"); Wesa de Jesus and Victor Robinson III ("Si Juan Tamad, ang Dyablo at ang Limang Milyong Boso"); Wesa Estrada ("Sweet Niece")

Best Actress-Musical

Blanche Lituchengco-Yoh ("Sweeney Todd"). What becomes of "Sweeney Todd" in schools the spotlight brightly on for the Christie demon barber of Fleet Street has for his sidekick, Mrs. Lovett? "I've noted in our version of the play Well, first and last, you get the sheer delight of watching Lituchengco-Yoh create a cracked-jack Mrs. Lovett that features no damage while being excitedly hot-assy.

Honorable mentions: Kaitlin Agsalis ("The Threepenny Opera"); Gloh Guevara-Lafuente and Thea Tolfer ("The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"); Tricia Juniper-Jimenez ("Song of Joseph")

Best Featured Actor-Musical

Marvin Ong ("Sweeney Todd"). Surprising self-possession and moving sensitivity marked Ong's portrayal of the young orphan Tobias, in only his second professional appearance on stage (he played Edmund in Trumpets' original musical, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" in 1998, or 11½ years old). His rendition of "Not While I'm Around" was an unexpected high point in the musical.

Honorable mentions: Sheri Chan ("The Threepenny Opera"); Nicco Manalo ("Spring Awakening"); Boy Cruz ("You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown")

Best Featured Actress-Musical

Rhiza Fuentanar ("The Threepenny Opera"). The "striking presence," as the theater connoisseurs behind the blog Professeur aptly called her. Sinatahan simply had to saunter across the stage in Fuentanar's getup—for the scenes that then, she had to sing, too, and what she did, no one else was better.

Honorable mentions: Liesl Batucan ("Sweeney Todd"); Sheila Francisco ("S.O.A.P."); Pinky Marquez ("Songs for a New World"); Frances Makil-Ignacio ("The Threepenny Opera"); Shea Eusebio ("Spring Awakening"); Irma Estrada ("Pitch... Tick... Boom!"); Joana Go ("Si Juan Tamad, ang Dyablo at ang Limang Milyong Boso")

E-mail jpadilla@inquirer.com.ph, visit www.jpbeyondlife.blogspot.com

JONATHAN Tadioan, Crispin Pineda and Rhi Bautista in Layeta Bacay's "Dios Resurrexion, Gagamasin ang Bayan," directed by Tuxqs Rotaquio for the Virgin Labfest 5

AUDIE Gemora, Menchie Lua-Ibrayan-Yoh and Marvin Ong in the Repertory Philippines production of Stephen Sondheim's "Sweeney Todd"

ETELLA Cabrera and Bernice Mirkin, Elizabeth I and Mary Stuart, respectively, in the Filipino version of the Schiller play, translated by Alice Pullen

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ISABEL Cuen Wilson

Former envoy to Spain is new CCP president

From page B1

Wilson is chair of the board of several companies, such as Business Horizons Corporation, Rhino Metbuilding, Metals Engineering Resources, Lawton Corporation and Citicon Holdings & Development.

She is director of the Asian Cultural Council of the Philippines, Steelman Philippine, House of Investments and Indra Philippines Inc.

She served as ambassador to Madrid during the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos.

Aside from revitalizing trade and cultural relations between the Philippines and Spain, Wilson was able to purchase a 1,250-sq m lot in a prestigious district in Madrid for the Philippine embassy and the ambassador's residence.

On Dec. 5, 1990, Vice President Salvador Laurel, chair of the Continental Commission; José María Alvarez del Manzano, Mayor of Madrid, and Wilson inaugurated the cornerstone of José Rizal, a replica of the one at Luneta in Manila, that now stands on Avenida de Filipinas.

The Spanish government conferred on Wilson the Gran Cruz de la Banda de Isabela la Católica. The Department of Foreign Affairs awarded her the General Mariano Ozaeta Diplomacy Award.

The first woman president of the Manila Polo Club, Wilson served two continuous terms. She is credited for the construction of a new building with a state-of-the-art kitchen and elegant function rooms. The Manila Polo Club is celebrating 100 years and she is the centennial celebration committee chair.

Wilson has been an active member of organizations such as the Makati Business Club; Heritage Conservation Society; National Museum Foundation; National Movement for Free Elections; Intramuros Administration; Philippine Business for Social Progress; Philippine Spanish Business Council; Museo ng Maynila; and Fundacion Amigos del Instituto Cervantes.

She also served as senior adviser for Spain and Portugal and for the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She is president of the Dasmariñas Village Association and Immaculate Village Saver Children Foundation.

Wilson has been a trustee of the CCP for six years. When she addressed the CCP assembly, she promised to uphold transparency and the spirit of service to the arts and culture center.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edu Enerio-S. Velarde

Rafa Mae Quinto

WISH LIST

MY WISH IS FOR GOOD HEALTH AND continued happiness. I hope the five relatives I'm sending to school will graduate soon. For the industry, I pray everyone will be busy next year. Work, work, work for everyone. For the country, I pray for peace. No more massacres and typhoons please. Rain, rain go away! I always pray for unity. Beyond San Diego Ar

First Christmas minus FrancisM

Maxene Magalona still misses her dad, especially this holiday season

By Reynold Sun Diego Jr.

RAPUSO ACTRESS MAXENE Magalona is having a bittersweet Christmas this year, her first without her father, rapper-TV host Francis Magalona, who died last March after a valiant battle with leukemia.

"I don't know what to expect," she told Inquirer Entertainment during the launch of her latest GMA 7 series, "Susan Yapagang Dudes." "On my recent birthday (Nov. 23), I cried and cried when I suddenly realized that my Papa is now gone."

The harsh truth has yet to sink in, she admitted.

"Sometimes when I hear his songs on the radio or when I see his videos on TV, I can find myself him believing that he's still around. But when the reality dawns on me ... I immediately break down."

She likes to let her when she least expects it, "when I'm alone in the car or ... when I'm bored at home."

Tears are healthy, she explained. "It's OK to grieve. It somehow makes me feel that he's still with me. That I'll never lose my memory of him."

She said her dad's passing has taught her the unique lesson of humility and optimism.

"My dad always taught us to look at the bright side of life." In the same vein, she said, his death made the family even closer.

"It became a tool for us to bond even more. I hope that when we're old, we'd still look out for each other," she said. She never expected one dad would get cancer. We thought it could never happen to our family. It made us realize just how important each one of us is."

As for the controversy regarding her mom Pia's rejection of the Walk of Fame honor for Francis M., the young actress simply said: "We are just honoring my dad's final wish."

One sure way to keep her dad's memory alive, she agreed, is by pursuing every advocacy that Francis M, a staunch nationalist, would approve of.

"My dad showed us that it's important to use your celebrity for the good. To be a positive influence on, and a blessing to, others — especially the youth."

She is active in the "Sko Mismo" campaign and supports Angel Locsin and Anne Curtis' "Stop and Share" charity.

"Sko Mismo," she pointed out, seeks to encourage young people to play an active role in the elections and in nation-building.

"Sko Mismo' is used spanky. I myself registered as I can vote next year," she said.

One issue, it's biggest problem is "hopelessness," she noted.

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MAXENE Magalona

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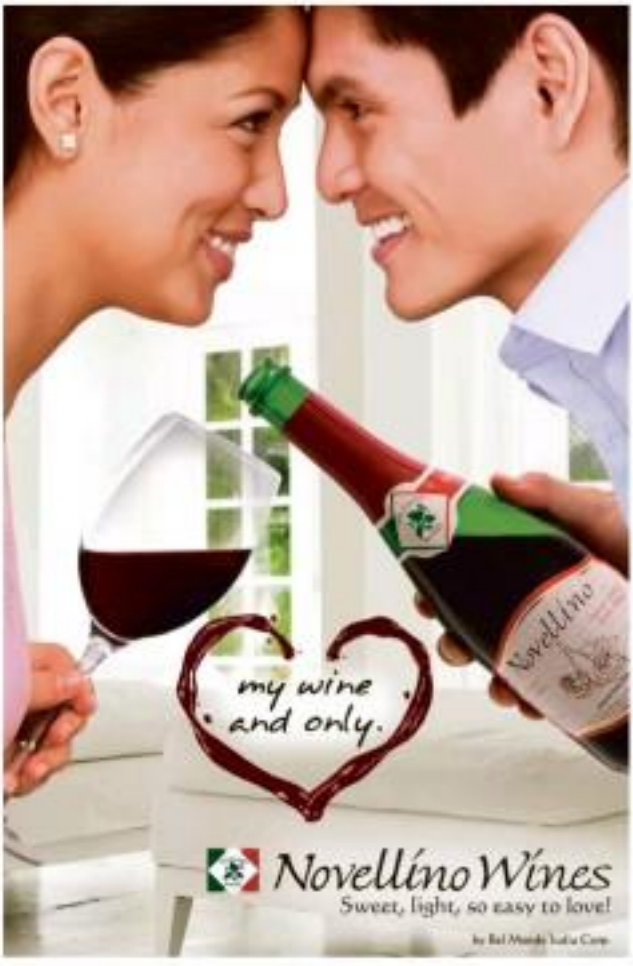

SHANG CINEPLEX

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CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCES at the GRAND ATRIUM

POWER PLANT CINEMA

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
PROMENADE

Alien Stitch returns from space mission

THE LOVABLE ALIEN IS BACK WITH A series premiere in "Stitch" on Dec. 20 at 5 p.m. on Disney Channel.

Alien leaning Hawaii for a vacation in space, Stitch has to make an emergency landing while escaping Professor Jumba and his minions.

In an ocean island paradise, Stitch meets a brave little girl named Lilo and discovers a local legend—the legendary Stone—which will grant him any wish as long as he completes 45 good deeds.

CLICK!

On Dec. 25, Disney Channel presents "Phineas & Ferb's Christmas Vacation" at 10:30 a.m.

It's Christmas Eve and as excited Phineas and Ferb are working to turn the city of Danville into a giant shimmering thank you card for Santa Claus.

Meanwhile, Dr. Doofenshmirtz develops a Naughty meter and suddenly the 70-mm-tree is headed for Santa's workshop and Jack Jones is hours as wanted snowsword.

Two of Santa's friends elves arrive to investigate, but Phineas and Ferb must quickly devise a way to spread holiday cheer.

STITCH

CNN heroes

CNN presents "CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute" on Dec. 25 at 6 p.m. and Dec. 26 at 2 a.m. and 7 a.m.

The third CNN tribute honors everyday citizens who are making a difference in their communities and beyond. Hipster Elton St. Authentic Jr. is the CNN hero of the Stars.

Celebrities in the awards include Uncle Kracker, Sam Hunter, Nell Patrick Harris, Penny Brahmat, Dwayne Johnson, Eva Mendes, Family Authors, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Carrie Underwood and Lionel Lewis.

Hanuk narvek

Discovery Channel's "Man Made Marvels: China's Forgotten City" airs Dec. 21 at 9 p.m.

The documentary features ingenious architecture and military secrets of the ancient underworld city of Qian.

It streams Jan. 1 at 12 a.m., 7 a.m. 3 p.m. and also 3 at 5 p.m.

Made Marvels: Giant Buddha" brings viewers to Leshan, home to the biggest stone-carved 1,200-year-old statue of Buddha in the world, which takes the shape of a Maitreya or future-to-been Buddha.

It airs Jan. 7 at 9 p.m., with encores on Jan. 8 at 12 a.m., 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. and Jan. 10 at 3 p.m.

Animated feast

Superheroes join the festive season in Stitch's "Merry Christmas" and Austin League's "Ely and Gambol" on Dec. 22 at 11 a.m. on Cartoon Network.

On Christmas Eve, the cartoon-themed presents Chowder in a Manipur version of Christmas in the premiere of "Hey Hey It's Fantastic" at 11 a.m., with the little Sent Bent gang in Codename: Kids "Question PLEASE!!!"

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
Walter Mart

MAGINE Magdalena and Francis H

First Christmas...

"We often hear people say: Why should we vote? Why should we care about our country? We should just migrate. I really pray that Filipinos would take pride in our nation. How can we help our country if we don't love it?"

In her most "modest" way, she is also paying it forward through her TV video, like in "Santa Ngayong Buhay," where she portrays a young lass grappling with unplanned pregnancy.

"I hope I can touch other young women how to handle their problems through my role," she said. "Our show is all about the real meaning of Christmas. It's about family, love and togetherness. It's also very timely because it's about people refreshing their lives after Tropical Storm Ondoy."

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ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

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DIRECTORS CLUB

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luzon

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visayas • mindanao

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Gabriel Valenciano

MY WISH IS THAT INSTEAD OF JUST entertaining people, we in the business could inspire them to do better or what they do. I also hope everyone sees that many of us working in this industry are not doing this just for ourselves but for the Ones who made it all possible.—God.

Marivel S. Cruz

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Did Marian, Dong tie the knot?

COULD IT BE THEIR TIME? Bubbling Bunnies and Marian Rivera got married recently? I mean, Dong is sent message for the road seems free as paved time, he hasn't replied.

If it's true, there's nothing wrong with that. Perhaps both of them just want to have a sense of normalcy, especially when they are jaded off with noise and controversies.

Don't they in the latest to see?

So the first and last time, the Batanes Magdalena chance her sentiments about who she and her kids would rather not in Maya Sharma (which *Pinapangit*) on the Tuntwood Hills of Ilocos.

When Ellen was still alive, he wanted to be part of the roster of stars in that project of Kapa Comics. It's sad that he didn't live to see that day. So the Bituin Heroines's sincere intentions is a little too late now.

"As always, I have nothing to say when under attack," he quips. "But to you are used to the tune, let me say that what really matters is the legacy that Ramon left behind and the people he made her touched.

"I will be out for the Christmas with our friends but we we will continue the tradition of spending Christmas Day with his side of the family and the rest with my relatives."

As the Master Rapper's supporters, Francisco Business Company does will be held at GMA Net Bazaar at the World Trade Center on Dec. 15-20.

Icons like Francisco need no Walk of Fame since He will always be a shining star in the hearts of his legions of fans.

***

Among Villma Santos' many accomplishments this year is the success of their friend's Lab in Cebu campaign. She inspired many mothers to join the activities which informed them about proper nutrition of "Go, Grow & Glow" type of foods for their kids. As she says in her ad, "Sex just one ball less (glasses of milk)."

The advocacy has reached out to its one millionth child in their school visits. I have not just one memory of Ate V but a handful.

Even if my room was identified with Pinoy Ramon's antics, it was impossible for me not to be drawn to the Star for All Seasons. When my daughter was a kid, she idolized her Ate Villma made it a point to attend all of Claire's birthday parties.

One beauty tip I learned from her is to keep makeup sponges soaked in ice cold water. Every time I'm up into her, she tells me by telling me "Wha Gumawood."

Through the years, Ate Vi's dedication remains as unflinching as her love will brand.

Guess list

As married politics is dead set on dumping his wife for his actress mistress. The forbidden lovers are not even discreet about their hottest dangerous rides they are abroad. No wonder the actress has been flashing that she is going to get hitched soon. Could the politico's marriage be sometimes with the real of his wives in 2010 so he no longer has to stay with his wife just for image?

***

As young singer who used to be as sweet as sugar is now more like brown sugar because of her "unrefined" wrist, like refuses to wear a beauty clinic if there are other clients waiting in the reception area. The area has to be cleared. She also demands that as soon as she arrives, the piped in music in the clinic must be her songs. No amount of beauty treatments can cover up her ugly attitude.

***

And viewers of GMA TV-turn-rating Abante Ang Laugh! (Entertainment vs. Digest) are in for more tension after season as the plot thickens. It is reportedly by Ina Calzado as Clarissa, a girl who denied nothing else since she was a kid has to be wealthy and powerful.

When she gets adopted by her rich godparents, she sees it as an opportunity to get rich for in the process she alienates the people she loves. She was discovered after her godparents murdered a video that could her look guilty of killing her godsister.

I for would dearly come to guide them when she finds out that she's pregnant with her ex-BF's baby and not her fiancé, Christa Quezon wins and see if it will have a happy ending.

***

The GMA Net Bazaar is on Dec. 15-20 at the World Trade Center in Pasay with the hottest bargains at the celebrity booths of GMA Kapuso artists. Also catch the fashion show from all-styles featuring their latest clothing line.

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Pacman has no advice for Tiger

He says he will tell all in his book, including his colorful love life

By Reynel San Diego Jr.

BOXER-TURNED-BIG-SCREEN-SUPERHERO Manny Pacquiao has a new nemesis—that of a mentor on his left coast, which he got at a local bar, he said.

"Hindi pa nga nagsisimula ' The ink is still fresh...ba' pinatitid nya.

The blazing mentor is reason for his next opponent Floyd Mayweather Jr., according to a web report.

But conspiracy theorists can't help asking: Is there a heavenly body named Kristo over there?

Huh.

Previous discussed the gossip hitting him with "Pinagdasal" comic Kristo Ranillo on "Ito-nguan" nation to discuss host their Metro Manila Film Fest entry.

His only message to commentators: "Sana matuwad ako ng pwet sila."

He finally saw Kristo, post-scandal, only last week (Dec. 6) when the action flick resumed shooting.

"Hindi naman pinag-usapan' lang siempre. Sumabit lang kami' nagkasama', hindi' kami nagkwentuhan e. Sabi ko lang sa kanya', 'Gwapo' ang mga chicks'. Sana super-taboo nila ang pelikula' natin.' 'Hoot Ang kami' nung tawa," he recalled. "Ganoon' naman' ako', hindi' sa hindi ng ano, Hoho' bagkus' na, tama-tinalo pa' eh."

He would also like to steer clear of the ongoing cat-fight between women Kristo and Bianca Bing.

(Bianca was allegedly ejected from a convention meeting room by Suzette Ranillo, Kristo's aunt.)

"Ayokong makialam sa' kaaway ng ibang tao. Ayokong maem-eskandalo' kasi nga' nagkapaniwalaan na' tayong lahat ngayong Kristo," he said.

He repeated the same mantra of non-involvement and forgiveness when asked to give advice to fellow beleaguered athlete, golfer Tiger Woods, who figured in an extramarital scandal as well.

"I don't care," Pacman said, laughing. "Ayokong pakialamanan' yan. Ang mesasabi ko lang ... lapag-usapan' kayo ang libro dahil ang Panginoon ay ang ding."

He related that he has a special relationship with God... which began when he had a "one-on-one conversation" with Him.

This 'evening pairs" will be discussed extensively in his upcoming book he's preparing.

"Sa libyong-libyong tao at mundo, bakit si Manny Pacquiao ang binigyan ng Panginoon ng pambihirang' talento? Hindi ko alaalam eh; malalaman ko kaya ng sarili sa history ng boxing," he said.

He refrained from giving further details about his personal "conversation with God."

"Bahu hindi siya na bilhin ang libro," he said.

The book would be his focus after the fight; the Hollywood movie with Sylvester Stallone would have to wait. "Hindi na nawin siguro sa' specialized staging kasi kami."

He promised that he would not leave anything out in the book, which is being written by a Filipino author and will be published in the United States upon his retirement after the Mayweather bout.

He will reveal everything, including drug use (as he admitted here life.

"Wala akong itatago," he said.

The tell-all book, which is entitled 'Pacquiao," will disclose the secret of his success. "Simple lang ang sikreto ni Manny Pacquiao: ang siempre mapagkumbaba, kilang diosmo ng Panginoon."

Further Pacman he referring to himself in the third person, it must be because he's working on his overseas.

"Hindi ko alaamhi na' pupulot siko' ... Ang kinawon maaring magkasabi, pero ang dating' nasa' pasasan ang dadalih nam sa Panginoon," he explained.

It's all about love, you know.

Unit in point: Although he has gifted with drakse with a new diamond ring, he assured

McDAVID (-)

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Pacman has no advice for Tiger

From page 3

Chairman emeritus Inquirer and not a "person of interest" as was reported in the tabloid columnist, he expects nothing resembling from his wife in return.

"Walang Pinoy friend ako. Aspirin pero ng republic. Kami sinisiwalis, ellegasi at malinaw ang sabi. Hindi ako matatalo. At na nag-imporsonate na akin, ang pera," he said.

E-mail bayanisantos@gmail.com.

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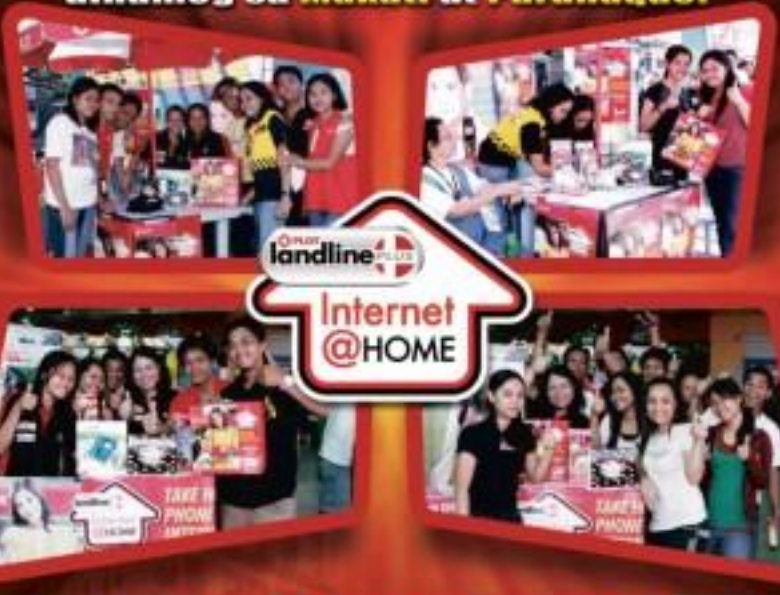

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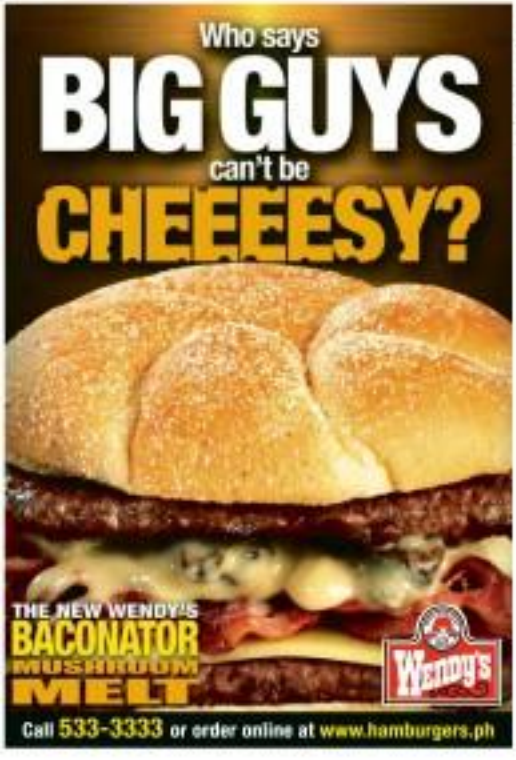

2 critics pick Top 10 films of the decade

@inquirerpeeps

YEARS PASS AND DATES change, or at least a little, by choosing their top films of the past decade, Associated Press movie critics David Germain and Christy Lemire stuck closely to their favorites from each year.

But here and there, a film that came in a bit lower on their list at the time has crept up in their esteem to make their cut for the best of the decade.

Here are Germain's picks, along with the ranking each film had on his annual Top 10 lists from years past:

1. **"Pan's Labyrinth"** (No. 1 for 2006)—Writer-director Guillermo del Toro presents a wondrous hybrid of stark historical drama and wildly inventive fantasy in this saga of a girl (Ivana Baquero) whose encounter with an otherworldly faun (Sergi Lopez) offers a marvelously ambiguous finale that could be the downer of the year—or pure bliss.

> 'Pan's' marvelously ambiguous finale could be the downer of the year—or pure bliss

2. **"You Can Count On Me"** (No. 1 for 2000)—The perfect script serves the perfect cast. Writer-director Kenneth Lonergan captures the essence of sibling unity and clashing money ill-a taut coiled drama propelled by extraordinary performances from Laura Linney and Mark Ruffalo. This small-budget Sundance prize-winner is soulful, hopeful, sometimes sad and hauntingly real all at once. On screen, family matters don't get more enjoyable than this.

3. **"The Barbarian Invasions"** (No. 1 for 2004)—Sentiment and cynicism in perfect blend. Writer-director Denys Arcand crafts a sly sketch of intellectuals who've grown emotionally jaundiced by living those yet still yearn a whiff of a pang in this rare, fitting sequel (Rémy Girard) to his unconventional, anti-establishment hit (Stephane Rousseau) and Oscar farewell to loved ones is heartbreaking, while Marie-Josee Croze brings a sublime damaged-goods grace as a junkie who scores heroin to ease the dying man's pain.

4. **"Dancer"** (No. 2 for 2007)—This story he-or-ried to new low gets on screen shattered, inspiring, nervous, hopeful, joyous, sometimes all at once. Director Steven Antin's documentary follows the rise of Sabrina Bryan from Cleveland teen to Mouseketeen to "Dancing With the Stars" champ, and the film offers a heartbreaking look at the unseen of doubting hurdles for a living. Ably supported by Anthony Mackie and Brian Gonzalez, Jeremy Sisto is brave, dour, frightening and tragic as a sequence addicted to the adrenaline rush of defeating expectations that the entertainment consumer of another way of life.

5. **"Children of Men"** (No. 7 for 2006)—Writer-director Alfonso Cuaron's dystopian vision of a future world in which humanity has become infertile and society is crumbling is a visceral, visionary thriller. Clive Owen is the everyman caught in the middle of a struggle to protect a pregnant refugee (Claire-Hope Ashitey) who could be the key to the survival of the species. Cuaron's camera takes us on "The Odyssey" to a Looney Tunes cacophony to "Gulliver's Travels" that lets George Clooney go deliciously over the top as leader of a Three Stooges-style trio hilariously rounded out by John Turturro and Tim Blake Nelson. With T Bone Burnett on mandolin, the sweet songs brought on a roots-music revival that continues today.

6. **"The Thin Red Line"** (No. 1 for 2000)—The first great big War film proves so universal that it can stand among the classics from past wars. Director Terrence Malick drops viewers in at ground zero for a disturbingly close and claustrophobic look at the stories of dwelling hostile for a living. Ably supported by Anthony Mackie and Brian Gonzalez, Jeremy Sisto is brave, dour, frightening and tragic as a sequence addicted to the adrenaline rush of defeating expectations that the entertainment consumer of another way of life.

7. **"The Insider"** (No. 1 for 2000)—Russell Crowe and Al Pacino are dynamite as Jeffrey Wigand, the scientist who blew the whistle on the tobacco industry's practices, and Lowell Bergman, the "60 Minutes" producer who helped him tell his story. Michael Mann's direction is crisp and compelling, and the film's climax is a nail-biter.

8. **"Mulholland Drive"** (No. 1 for 2001)—David Lynch's "Sunset Boulevard" noir-mystery-love story-showbiz satire-dream movie is a dizzying, unforgettable ride through the underbelly of Hollywood dreams. Naomi Watts is a revelation as a wide-eyed ingenue who arrives in town to become a star and finds herself in a surreal, sexy, scary labyrinth of mystery and deception. Laura Harring is her dark, mysterious counterpart, and Lynch regular Justin Theroux is perfectly cast as a director who's losing control of his movie and his life.

9. **"Adaptation"** (No. 1 for 2002)—Spike Jonze's mind-bending, self-referential comedy about screenwriting and creativity stars Nicolas Cage as Charlie Kaufman and his fictional twin brother, Donald, who's trying to write a formulaic screenplay based on Susan Orlean's book "The Orchid Thief." Meryl Streep is Orlean, Chris Cooper is John Laroche and Tilda Swinton is Laroche's lover. Kaufman's script is a wonderful, weird, witty, wacky, wild ride.

10. **"Moulin Rouge"** (No. 1 for 2001)—Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo + Juliet" was a wild, wacky, wonderful take on the Shakespeare classic, but this time he's gone completely bonkers. Set in Paris in 1899, the film is a delirious, dizzying, dazzling, deliciously overwrought musical about love, beauty, truth, freedom and absinthe. Nicole Kidman is the courtesan Satine, who falls for Christian (Ewan McGregor), a penniless writer who's mistaken for the Duke of Worcester (John Leguizamo) by the owner of the Moulin Rouge nightclub (Jim Broadbent). Their impossible love is set to a mash-up of contemporary pop songs and classics, and Luhrmann's camera takes us on "The Odyssey" to a Looney Tunes cacophony to "Gulliver's Travels" that lets George Clooney go deliciously over the top as leader of a Three Stooges-style trio hilariously rounded out by John Turturro and Tim Blake Nelson. With T Bone Burnett on mandolin, the sweet songs brought on a roots-music revival that continues today.

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(Conclusion tomorrow)

DID YOU KNOW...

O'Connor tells pope to quit

DUBLIN—Ireland's longest-serving bishop, Edward O'Connor called on Friday for Pope Benedict to step down over a growing scandal over sexual abuse of children by priests.

The German pontiff's statement on Friday saying the Pope felt "outrage, betrayal and shame" over the scandal and would come to the Irish people about sexual abuse.

But O'Connor, who influenced Catholic establishment by tipping up a parcel of Benedict predecessor Pope John Paul II on live television, said in a letter published in a Irish newspaper Sunday on Friday that the Pope had to...